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THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF  
RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY



Religion — an evolutionary process





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I Raja Rammohun Roy  
After a painting by H. P. Briggs,  
Bristol Museum  
Blocks lent by the Prabasi, Calcutta



SOPHIA DOBSON COLLET

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF  
RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY

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Itihāser Khasrā, Vāṅglār Nāri-Jāgaraṇ etc.*

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## PREFACE

Miss Sophia Dobson Collet's *The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohan Roy* has the distinction of being the standard biography in English, of the great pioneer of the nineteenth century Indian renaissance. Published posthumously in 1900 (six years after the death of the author) by Harold Collet, London, it soon engaged the attention of the reading public in Europe and India and in 1913 a well-edited second edition was brought out by the late Hemchandra Sarkar, missionary of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, from Calcutta. This Indian edition was also sold out within a short period and since then the work had been lying out of print. In the meanwhile interest in Rammohun Roy's life and times has steadily been on the increase in this country and abroad and a fresh study and assessment of him appears at the present moment to be a keenly felt desideratum. Accordingly, at the request of the executive committee of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, we have endeavoured to prepare the present edition of the book.

The author, as it will appear from the brief sketch of her career appended at the end of the present volume, was a life-long invalid and she collected the material for her study and wrote portions of her work from sick-bed. Her strength having failed after she had made some progress, she requested a friend, Rev. F. Herbert Stead, to continue and complete it for her. Rev. Stead worked on the immense mass of material collected by her long and laborious researches and succeeded ultimately in finishing the book and getting it published. Up to a point the continuator's text could be revised by Miss Collet, but later the complete breakdown of her health made even this impossible and Rev. Stead had to work practically without any guidance. The present text can thus properly be divided into three sections : (1) pages 1-124 (up to the first paragraph) are from the pen of Miss Collet ; (2) pages 124-183 (up to the first paragraph) represent that portion of the continuator's manuscript which could secure the



benefit of Miss Collet's revision ; (3) the rest of the book, which is exclusively the composition of Rev. Stead. The latter however has carried out his task so ably and with such complete self-effacement, that one hardly feels as one reads through the pages that more than one hand are at work in the field of penmanship. In fact his great success in continuing and completing Miss Collet's narrative, fully justifies the following remark he made in the continuator's note : "But the work in conception, outline, materials, and in all but concluding literary execution, is and remains Miss Collet's."

It is hardly necessary here to dilate upon the intrinsic merits of Miss Collet's work. To be the biographer of Rammohun Roy, was with her, the supreme mission of life, in trying to fulfil which she defied all obstacles including serious and continuous ill health. This passionate zeal had been nicely matched by the complete detachedness of her outlook and a phenomenal capacity for collecting facts and verifying them. These sterling qualities mark all her literary activities detailed notice of which has been taken in appendix xi to the present volume. Nowhere however are these so much in evidence as in her *Life* of Rammohun Roy, which has lost none of its high standards of usefulness and literary excellence even after the lapse of more than sixty years. This is certainly not the same as saying that the present work does not suffer from limitations and inadequacies. On the factual side it has very naturally come, as all objective accounts invariably must, to be a little out of date with the progress of time and subsequent discovery of fresh data from quarters originally beyond the reach of the author. To some readers again its value as an interpretative study may seem to have been slightly impaired because of the occasionally perceptible inclination of the author and the continuator to overemphasise the Christian element in Rammohun's thought. This is however not at all surprising. By circumstance, training and conviction Miss Collet and the continuator were sincere Christians. (Miss Collet had given up her inherited Unitarian faith in later life and had returned to Trinitarianism ; Rev. Stead the continuator was for a long time a Congregational minister at Leicester.) Moreover not knowing Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, they were incapable of any deep understanding or

appreciation of the ancient and medieval spiritual and cultural heritage of India the best and noblest elements of which, no less than the influences of Western learning, had provided Rammohun with the basis for his philosophy of life. This criticism from the Indian point of view should however by no means be allowed to detract in any way from the great merit of their work,—a labour of love—performed with singular honesty and sincerity under extremely trying circumstances. The present generation of Indians should ever remain grateful to these two foreigners who had taken so much pains to preserve the life-story of one of their great countrymen.

The great importance of Rammohun Roy in the national life of present-day India as well as the supreme necessity of a thorough study of his life and work by the students of modern Indian history; cannot be overemphasised. This is not the proper place for a full-fledged discussion of these topics. We can however form an adequate impression of this by referring to the estimates forthcoming from two great contemporary Indians, both of whom can be counted as worthy products of the modern Indian renaissance. Rabindranath Tagore clearly admits having received the basic ideals of his life from Raja Rammohun Roy and describes the mission of his hero in the following characteristic lines: "Rammohun belongs to the lineage of India's great seers who age after age have appeared in the arena of our history with the message of the Eternal Man." (*Bhārat Pathik Rāmmohana Rāya*, Visvabharati, 1366 B. S. pp. 68, 138). Swami Vivekananda's tribute is no less emphatic Sister Nivedita gives the following record of a conversation with Swamiji at Nainital in May, 1898: "It was here too that we heard a long talk on Rammohun Roy, in which he [Swami Vivekananda] pointed out three things as the dominant notes of this teacher's message, his acceptance of the Vedanta, his preaching of patriotism and the love that embraced the Mussulman equally with the Hindu. In all these things, he claimed himself to have taken up the task that the breadth and foresight of Rammohun Roy had mapped out." (*Notes of Some Wanderings with Swami Vivekananda*, Third Edition, Udbodhan Office, Calcutta 1948, p. 16). Tagore and Vivekananda, both eminent in their



respective spheres, are known to have differed radically in their environment ideals and outlook, and the fact that personalities of such different moulds could draw inspiration equally from Rammohun Roy, illustrates sufficiently well how widely and deeply the latter's life and thought had moved and influenced the succeeding generations in India.

The method followed by the editors in revising and bringing the book up to date, may be briefly stated. The original text of Miss Collet and the continuator remains unaltered. The foot-notes and references have all been carefully checked and corrections have been made wherever necessary. References to pages have been specifically inserted in those cases where the original foot-notes were without them. In some cases the original foot-notes have required further elaboration and the editors have put their own comments within brackets under their signatures. New foot-notes and references introduced by the editors are also similarly signed. To each chapter the editors have further added supplementary notes in which they have sought to discuss the controversial topics according to the context, as well as to incorporate relevant material that has come to light since the first edition of the book was published in 1900. Except nos. viii and ix (which appeared as Introduction to Dr. H. C. Sarkar's edition of 1913), the remaining nine appendices are new additions to the present volume. The list of Rammohun Roy's publications and the index have been prepared afresh. The 'select bibliography is a new feature which it is hoped, would be welcome to those who would wish to make a further study of the subject. In short, the editors have spared no pains to bring Miss Collet's book up to date and make it useful for modern readers. They will consider their labours amply rewarded if it serves to create some interest in the life and times of Raja Rammohun Roy among the reading public.

The editors regret that it has not been possible to maintain any kind of uniformity in the spelling of Indian proper names and the readers are requested to consult the index for standard forms in most cases. They also apologise for the many misprints that have crept into the text. The more serious ones have been noticed in the errata appended at the end.

In conclusion the editors consider it their pleasant duty to offer grateful thanks to all the institutions and individuals that have helped them in their task. To the Principal and the Librarian of the Serampore College they are indebted for kind permission to consult the old records of the Serampore Baptist Mission and the old files of the *Friend of India* preserved in the library of the College. Dr. Stephen N. Hay, Assistant Professor of History, University of Chicago, kindly drew their attention to a few unpublished letters of Ram-mohun Roy now preserved in libraries of Europe and America, and also gave some useful suggestions. The Academy of Fine Arts, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the Baṅgīya Sahitya Parishad, Sri Amal Home, Sri Asoke Chatterjee, Sri Devaprasad Mitra and Sri Nisikanta Sen have kindly lent rare books and old photographs in their possession for the purpose of illustrating the book. The editors are grateful to Sri Devaprosad Mitra who has kindly seen the book through the Press with great care and to Srimati Bharati Biswas who has rendered ungrudging assistance in correcting the proofs. Thanks are also due to Sri Birendrakumar Roy, Secretary, Sadharan Brahmo Samaj who has taken keen interest in the progress of the work ; to Sri Pulinbihari Sen, for obtaining many of the rare illustrations ; and to Sri Jagadindra Bhaumik for seeing these through the Press. Grateful mention must also be made of the unfailing courtsey and co-operation received from Sri Manindrakumar Sarkar, Manager, Brahmo Mission Press and his staff, as well as from the Bengal Autotype Company.

DILIP KUMAR BISWAS

PRABHAT CHANDRA GANGULI

Calcutta

27 September, 1962





## CONTINUATOR'S NOTE

[The Continuator of Miss Collet's unfinished work scrupulously kept himself anonymous throughout. His identity however has been disclosed by Miss Clara Collet, a niece of the author in a letter to Dr. P. K. Sen, dated November 9, 1933. We come to know from the said letter, that he was the late Rev. F. Herbert Stead who was for several years a Congregationalist minister at Leicester, the editor of the *Independent and Nonconformist* (1890-92) and shortly after Miss Collet's death in March 1894, the Warden of the Robert Browning Settlement at Walworth. For the text of Miss Clara Collet's letter, see P. K. Sen's *Biography of a New Faith*, Calcutta 1950, Vol. I, Appendix I, pp. 353-54.—*Editors.*]

"I am dying. I cannot finish my 'Life of Rammohun Roy'. But when I enter the Unseen, I want to be able to tell Rammohun that his 'Life' will be finished. Will you finish it for me?" Such was Miss Collet's message. It was sent to one whom she had never so much as seen, who had taken no part in the movements which she had most at heart, and who had only the vaguest knowledge of her hero. The work was not at all along the line of his main pursuits. But to a request of this kind, uttered on the threshold of the eternal world he felt there could be only one answer. It came to him as a mandate which he could not disobey,—a mandate none the less imperative because wholly unexpected and unprepared for.

In undertaking the task he has endeavoured simply to complete the author's work. Of the immense mass of material which he used, almost all had been collected by her during long and laborious years of patient research : there was scarcely a source he drew from, which she had not indicated. Her general impression of Rammohun's character he has verified and followed. He has adhered to her method of spelling Indian names, excepting in quotations of titles and passages from



other works, where he has reproduced the spelling however arbitrary or inconsistent, of his sources. Being himself no expert in Indian affairs, he gladly acknowledges the technical aid he has received from Miss E. A. Manning, Mr. N. Gupta and Mr. Ananda Mohun Bose. But the work in conception, outline, materials and in all but concluding literary execution, is and remains Miss Collet's.

The author died on the 27th March, 1894. The continuator regrets that the work has not appeared sooner. The delay has been occasioned, first by the interposition of obstacles for which he was not responsible, and next by the exigencies of other and more innexorable duties. His part has had to be done in snatches of leisure that were very rare and very brief.

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THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF  
RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY





## CHAPTER I

( 1772—1803 )

### SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

1772, May 22	His birth at Radhanagar.
1781-82	Second and Third Marriages.
1787	Leaves home to study Buddhism in Tibet.
1790-91	Returns home and shortly afterwards settles at Benares <sup>1</sup>
1800	Birth of his elder son Radhaprasad
1801	First acquaintance with Mr. John Digby, of Bengal C. S.
1803	Death of his father Ramkanta Roy

Rammohun Roy was born in the village of Radhanagar, near Krishnagar, in the Zilla of Hugli on the 22nd of May, 1772\*

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1. This is not correct. See Note I at the end of the Chapter.

—Editors.

\* Much uncertainty has existed as to the year of Rammohun's birth. The date most frequently accepted is that given on his tombstone viz. 1774 ; but I give the earlier date in the text on the following authorities. The Rev. C. H.A. Dall in a letter to the *Sunday Mirror* of Jan. 18, 1880, reported that Rammohun's younger son Ramaprasad Roy said in 1858 before a circle of friends and clients in Calcutta,—“My father was born at Radhanagar, near Krishnagar in the month of May 1772 ; or according to the Bengali era, in the month of Jyais̥tha 1179.” Mr. Dall asked for the day of birth, but Ramaprasad was unable to give this. The fact has since however, been supplied by another lineal descendant of Rammohun, Babu Lalit-mohun Chatterji who has stated that “Rammohun Roy was born in the year, 1772, on the 22nd day of May.” For this and a few other details, I am indebted to the kindness of Babu Phanibhusan Mukherji, of Rajshahi College who learnt them from Babu Rabindranath Tagore to whom Babu L. M. Chatterji had given the information.



His pedigree has been preserved upto a very early date, but we need not trace it in detail beyond his great-grandfather, Krishnachandra Banerji, who entered the service of the Nawab of Bengal and received from him the title of "Roy Roy",<sup>2</sup> afterwards contracted into Roy, which has ever since remained the designation of the family. This occurred during the reign of Emperor Aurangzib (1619<sup>3</sup>-1707).

Krishnachandra is said to have been an acute and able man, and a zealous member of the Vaishnava sect. He had three sons; Hariprasad Amarchandra and Brajabinode. Brajabinode Roy was wealthy and philanthropic and devotedly attached to his gods. He was employed under the Nawab Siraj-ud-Dowla in some honourable position at Murshidabad,<sup>4</sup> but on account of some ill treatment he quitted that employment and spent the rest of his life at home. His fifth son Ramkanta Roy, was the father of our hero. But Rammohun's maternal ancestors belonged to the rival sect of the Śāktas, of which his mother's father was a priest—a curious conjuncture of antecedents for the future reformer of Hinduism. How this came to pass is thus narrated :—As Brajabinode Roy lay dying on the banks of the Ganges, a man named Shyama Bhattacharya of Chatara near Serampore, came to him requesting a boon. He was of honour-

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2. Evidently "Rāya Rāyān."—*Editors.*

3. Emperor Aurangzib was born on the 24th October, 1618.

—*Editors.*

4. This is not correct. See Note II at the end of the Chapter.

—*Editors.*

able parentage and his family were well-known as the priests of the locality. The kind-hearted Brajabinode readily consented, and swore by the Ganges to grant the boon ; whereupon Shyama Bhattacharya asked permission to bestow his daughter in marriage upon one of Brajabinode's sons. Now as he was not only the priest of a rival sect but a *bhanga kulin*\* the dying man felt as if he had been trapped, but having sworn by the Ganges, he could not break his word. So he called his seven sons, and requested them, one by one, to make good his promise. All refused except the fifth son, Ramkanta, who readily accepted the unwelcome bride, and in due course married her. They had three children : the eldest was a daughter ( name not recorded ) ; the second and third were sons, Jagamohun and Rammohun. The daughter married one Sridhar Mukherji, said to have been a clever man (whose father is reported to have lived to his 125th year), and her son, Gurudas Mukerji, was much attached to his uncle Rammohun, and is said to have been the latter's first convert in his own family.

Ramkanta Roy had also another wife<sup>5</sup>, of whom nothing is known except that she had a son

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\* A *bhanga* (or broken) *Kulin* is a *Kulin* who has broken his *Kula* or Caste. (*Kula* in the present context is not caste ; it means the topmost categories of a caste to marry out of which was considered a breach of social decorum for a *Kulin*—Editors.)

5. Ramkanta Roy had three wives ; the eldest Subhadra Devi was childless ; the second, Tarini Devi, was the daughter of Shyama Bhattacharya and mother of three children including Rammohun and the third, Rammoni Devi had a son named Ramlochan. See Brajendranath Banerji *Rammohun Roy* ( in Bengali ) 4th Edition, p. 12—Editors.



named Ramlochan, of whom but little is recorded. But it is quite evident that Rammohun's mother was the mistress of the household. Her name was Tarini, but she was always called Phulthakurani, *i. e.*, "the fifth son's wife." She was a woman of strong character and of fine understanding and appears to have had considerable influence over her husband.

All that is recorded of Ramkanta Roy shows him to have been an upright and estimable man. He, like his father<sup>6</sup> served for a time ( as a Sarcar ) under Siraj-ud-Dowla, but subsequently retired to Radhanagar. Here he rented some villages from the Raja of Burdwan, which seems to have been the first beginning of a long series of disputes between the Raja and the Roy family. Judging from the full report of a lawsuit brought against Rammohun Roy many years later by this Raja, he appears to have been so unscrupulous a man that we may fairly conclude him to have been in the wrong in his early conflicts with Ramkanta Roy, who was often so disgusted with the treatment he received that he would neglect his affairs for a while, and retire to meditate and tell his *Harinam* beads in a garden of sacred Tulsi plants. He was very devout, and a staunch believer in Vishnu as the Supreme God, and in Rāma as the last incarnation but one<sup>7</sup> of Vishnu. Fortunately for his domestic peace, his Śākta wife was soon led to adopt his beliefs, which she did so heartily as to occasion some slight friction with her father if legend speaks truly.

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6. See footnote 4 above—*Editors*.

7. According to Jayadeva's enumeration in his *Gītagovinda* ( c. 1200 A. D. ) Rāma, son of Daśaratha, is the *seventh* of the ten incarnations of Vishnu—*Editors*.

Such was the home into which Ramminohun Roy was born. His father spared no expense in his education ; and local traditions assert that he showed great intelligence at an early age, and possessed a remarkably tenacious memory, never forgetting anything which he had once heard or read. After completing his school course of Bengali education, he took up the study of Persian ( then the Court language throughout India ), and soon became fascinated by the mystic poetry and philosophy of the Persian Sufis, for which he retained an ardent attachment throughout his life. He was next sent to Patna to learn Arabic, and ( it is said, by his mother's desire ) to Benares to learn Sanskrit. At Patna his masters set him to study Arabic translations from Euclid and Aristotle and he then also made acquaintance with the Koran. All these influences, especially the last, tended inevitably towards the disintegration of his earliest religious beliefs, which had been very fervent. His friend, William Adam, wrote of him in 1826 :—"He seems to have been religiously disposed from his early youth, having proposed to seclude himself from the world as a *Sannyasi*, or devotee, at the age of fourteen, from which he was only dissuaded by the entreaties of his mother." It is said that his reverence for Vishnu was at one time so great that he would not even take a draught of water without first reciting a chapter of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The boundless veneration which he is said to have entertained for his father's household deities, is still more characteristically illustrated by the story that he could not bear to witness the performance of the Yātrā ( or popular play ) of *Man Bhanjan*, in



which the God Krishna weeps, clasping the feet of his fair Rādhikā, and his peacock head-gear and green clothes are seen rolling in the dust.

Another anecdote is reported of his Hindu period,—that “for the attainment of knowledge and wisdom,” he had, at a great expense, a certain ceremony performed for him 22 times, called *Puraścharana*, consisting in a repetition of the name of a deity, accompanied with burnt offerings.

But Rammohun was not to pass out of this early phase without one mark of Hindusim which remained to colour his whole life. While yet a mere child, his father married him three times. The first bride died “at a very early age” (not specified), and after her death as we learn from William Adam’s letters, “his father, when he was only about nine years of age, married him within an interval of less than a twelvemonth to two different wives. This was in perfect conformity with the usage of his caste [the Kulin Brahman] and was done when he was incapable of judging for himself.”\*

At last came the inevitable break. All accounts agree that it was preceded by much theological discussion between Rammohun and his father, and it is probably to this period that we should refer the following reminiscences of Mr. Adam, given in his Memorandum of 1879.

“It is not often that we get an insight into Hindu family life but his [ Ramkanta Roy’s ] son gave me a slight glance at least in referring to the amicable differences that arose between himself and his father on this subject. I inferred from what

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\* The first of these two wives was the mother of his children. She died in 1824. The second wife survived him.

R. R. said that he always left it to his father, as the head and most venerable member of the family, to open the question which he thought fit to moot, and when he had finished his immediate argument, he was generally willing to listen to his son with patience, which sometimes, however, forsook him. The son's response after the necessary preliminary admissions, usually began with the adversative particle 'But' (Kintu). 'But notwithstanding all this, the orthodox conclusion you aim at does not follow.' The father complained of this, and on one occasion, at least, burst out in the tone of remonstrance, as of an injured party : 'Whatever argument I adduce you have always your *Kintu*, your counter-statement, your counter-argument, your counter-conclusion to oppose to me.' The son recounted this to me with half a smile on his lips and a touch of humour in his voice, but without any expression of disrespect to his father."

What follows may best be told in the words of Dr. Lant Carpenter :

"Without disputing the authority of his father, he often sought from him information as to the reasons of his faith ; he obtained no satisfaction ; and he at last determined at the early age of 15, to leave the paternal home, and sojourn for a time in Tibet, that he might see another form of religious faith. \* He

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\**Review of the Labours, Opinions, and Character of Rammohun Roy*, 1833, pp. 101-102. Dr. Carpenter adds in a foot-note : "The statement made in the preceding [*i e*, the above] sentence, I heard from the Rajah himself in London, and again at Stapleton Grove [Bristol]." This testimony is important as distinctly contravening the story that Rammohun left home on account of a family disagreement caused by his having 'when about the age of sixteen composed a manuscript calling in question the validity of the idolatrous system of the Hindus' ; a story which, although repeated by all Rammohun's biographers, was never heard of till after his death, and rests upon no authority whatever, except the spurious "autobiographical letter" published by Sandford Arnot in the *Athenœum* of Oct. 5, 1833. (See Appendix VIII—*Editors*.)



spent two or three years in that country, and often excited the angers of the worshippers of the Lama by his rejection of their doctrine that this pretended deity—a living man—was the creator and preserver of the world. In these circumstances he experienced the soothing kindness of the female part of the family ; and his gentle, feeling heart lately dwelt with deep interest , at the distance of more than forty years, on the recollections of that period which, he said, had made him always feel respect and gratitude towards the female sex.”

The precise extent and duration of his travels is not known ; but they appear to have lasted about three or four years, and to have been terminated by a message of recall from his father, who is said to have grieved much at his absence, and to have shown him great kindness on his return. But all accounts agree that he did not remain long under the family roof, the incompatibility being too great. Our only actual knowledge as to his next step is derived from his own evidence in the Burdwan lawsuit already referred to, in which he states that “so far from inheriting the property of his deceased father, he had, during his lifetime, separated from him and the rest of the family, in consequence of his altered habits of life and change of opinions, which did not permit their living together.” Whither he betook himself none of his biographers seem to have known ; but happily the missing fact is supplied in the letters of his friend, William Adam, who wrote in 1826 that Rammohun, after relinquishing idolatry, “was obliged to reside for ten or twelve years at Benares, at a distance from all his friends and relatives, who lived on the family

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8. See Note III at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*

estate at Burdwan, in Bengal.”<sup>9</sup> Referring to this period, another friend has testified as follows :—‘So strongly were his feelings wrought upon by the alienation which then commenced, that through life, under the pressure of dejection or disease, the frowning features of his father would rise unbidden on his imagination’.\*

Probably he fixed his residence at Benares on account of the facilities afforded by that sacred city for the study of Sanskrit ; and if so, we may conclude that it was chiefly at this period that he acquired his extensive knowledge of the Hindu Śāstras. Certainly it was not till then that he began family life on his own account, for his eldest son, Radhaprasad, was born in the year 1800, when Rammohun must have been about twenty-eight years old, apparently seven years after his return from travel. On what resources he then subsisted does not appear. The only lucrative occupation in which he is ever known to have been engaged was his work in the Civil Service under the East India Company ; but that must certainly be referred to a later date, as he only began to learn English in 1796, and had not obtained much pro-

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9. This is not correct. Rammohun could not possibly have stayed at Benares for so long a period. See Note IV at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*

\* *A Discourse on the Occasion of the Death of Rajah Rammohun Roy*, by W. J. Fox, London, 1833, pp. 16-17. As I have never seen this fact mentioned anywhere else, I conclude that Mr. Fox heard it from Rammohun himself, with whom he was on very friendly terms.



ficiency in it by 1801.<sup>10</sup> Probably, however, in such a seat of Hindu learning as Benares he might have obtained employment by copying manuscripts. In any case, he seems to have remained there until his father's death in 1803. It is a relief to know that after all their differences, the father and son were together at the last.<sup>11</sup> This we learn from Mr. Adam, who reports as follows in his Memorandum :

"R. Roy, in conversation, mentioned to me with much feeling that he had stood by the deathbed of his father, who with his expiring breath continued to invoke his God—Ram ! Ram ! with a strength of faith and a fervour of pious devotion which it was impossible not to respect although the son had then ceased to cherish any religious veneration for the family deity".

Ramkanta Roy was succeeded in his estate by his son Jagamohun. Rammohun inherited no portion of his father's property.\*

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10. Miss Collet does not seem well-informed regarding this phase of Rammohun's career. See Note IV at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*

11. On this point see Note V at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*

\* In Rammohun's evidence on the Burdwan law-suit, he describes his own position as that of "a son separating himself from his father during his life-time, and by his own exertion acquiring property unconnected with his father, and after his father's death inheriting no portion of his father's property".



## SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

### I

This does not seem to be correct. Modern investigation tends to show that during the years 1790-91 Rammohun was most probably at Radhanagar. In or about 1792 Ramkanta Roy removed with his family from his ancestral house at Radhanagar to the adjoining village of Langulpara where he built a new house. "Towards the end of 1796 Ramkanta Roy took a step that greatly influenced the career of his second son Rammohun. He divided the bulk of his immovable property among his three sons by a deed of partition executed on the 1st December 1796 (19th Agrahāyana, B.S. 1203). He assigned the house at Langulpara jointly to Jagamohun and Rammohun and his share of the ancestral house at Radhanagar to his youngest son Ramlochan. Among other properties he allotted the entire taluk Harirampur to Jagamohun and a house with a pond bounded by four boundaries purchased of Ramkrishna Set and others at Jorasanko in Mauja Calcutta" to Rammohun. Ramkanta retained exclusively as his own share "a small part" of his self acquired property and the Burdwan lodging house as well as the idols, the worship of which he had himself established. His own share in the worship of his ancestral idols was distributed equally among his three sons (R. P. Chanda and J. K. Majumdar. *Selections from the Official Letters and Documents Relating to the Life of Raja Rammohun Roy* pp. xxi-xxii). The original deed of partition was in Bengali. An English translation is attached to the Bill of Complaint of Govindaprasad Roy, nephew of Rammohun, filed in the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William, on the 23rd June 1817, (*Ibid* pp. 71-75), in connection with the law-suit *Govindaprasad Roy vs. Rammohun Roy*. (For details of this case, see Note V to Chapter II.)

### II.

Brajabinode Roy, grandfather of Rammohun, served under Nawab Alivardi Khan, the grandfather and immediate

predecessor of Nawab Siraj-ud-Dowla, with distinction and rendered useful service to the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II (1759-1806) when the latter came to the Eastern Provinces as heir-apparent in 1759 and continued to reside there even after his accession to the throne. In a letter addressed to Rammohun by the Mughal King Akbar II of Delhi in 1828, the latter refers to the good services rendered by Rammohun's grandfather to emperor Shah Alam II during Shah Alam's residence in the Eastern Provinces. (See Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* p. xx ; Banerji *Rammohun Roy* p. 11 ; for the text of King Akbar's letter see Banerji *Rajah Rammohun Roy's Mission to England* pp. 3-4 ; J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and the Last Moghuls* p. 331.)

### III

Some of the modern writers question the historicity of Rammohun's visit to Tibet in his boy-hood (e. g. Brajendranath Banerji, *Rammohun Roy ; The First Phase* in the *Calcutta Review* December 1933 p. 254). It is true that Rammohun nowhere specifically refers to his early sojourn to Tibet in his extant writings. But the fact that Dr. Carpenter heard *twice* about it *from Rammohun himself* and the specific details mentioned by him leave hardly any room for doubt in the matter. In a memoir on Rammohun Roy published in Calcutta in 1879, Rev. K. S. Macdonald has given the following account of Rammohun's Tibetan visit : "While at Patna he must have heard a good deal of Buddhism, if not also of the religious practices of the aboriginal tribes inhabiting the hills of Central and Southern India and the slopes of the Himalayas. By going to Tibet he would come into closer contact with Buddhism, and on his way thither, might also learn something of the devil-worship of the aborigines. In Tibet he spent two or three years disputing daily with the worshipper of the living Lama, who frequently passed from quiet ratiocination to angry abuse of the stranger. He however met with much kindness as many a stranger has before and since in kindred circumstances, from the female sex, a kindness which, forty years after, he said, had made him always feel respect and gratitude towards



the gentle sex.” (Quoted in *The Father of Modern India : Rammohun Roy Centenary Commemoration Volume Part II* p. 30). In the autobiographical letter of Rammohun, published after his death by his one-time secretary Sandford Arnot in the London journals the *Athenæum* and the *Literary Gazette*, there is the following statement : “When about the age of sixteen, I composed a manuscript calling in question the validity of the idolatrous system of the Hindoos. This, together with my known sentiments on the subject, having produced a coolness between me and my immediate kindred, I proceeded on my travels and passed through different countries, chiefly within but some beyond the bounds of Hindoostan with a feeling of great aversion to the establishment of the British power in India.” (For the text of this autobiographical letter, see Appendix VIII.) The travels in countries beyond the bounds of Hindoostan may possibly have included the visit to Tibet. It is only fair to say that Miss Collet regarded the above letter as spurious. But she does not assign any reasons for her opinion. In the Arabic preface to his Persian tract *Tuhfatul Muwahhidin* Rammohun makes a further reference to his early travels in the following words : “I travelled in the remotest parts of the world, in plains as well as in hilly lands . . .” (*Tuhfatul Muwahhidin or A Gift to Deists* Eng. Trans. by Maulavi Obaidullah El Obaide, Reprint Calcutta 1949, Introduction). It may be mentioned in passing that the famous French scholar Garcin de Tassy, a contemporary and an acquaintance of Rammohun Roy, also refers to the latter’s early visit to Tibet though he adds nothing to the evidence of Dr. Carpenter. (See Garcin de Tassy *Histoire de la Littérature Hindouie et Hindoustanie* seconde édition, Tome II. p. 549). On this point, we consider the personal testimony of Dr. Carpenter, conclusive. It should also be noted that the assumption of Rammohun’s early visit to Tibet does not present any chronological difficulty. He could have easily spent the period from 1788 to 1790, or at least a part of it, in Tibet. (See Prabhat Chandra Ganguli *Rammohun-Prasaṅga* in Bengali, Calcutta 1353 B. S. pp. 89-93).



## IV

About nine months after the partition of Ramkanta Roy's property (in 1796), Rammohun left Langulpara for Calcutta in September 1797, leaving his two wives with his mother Tarini Devi. In Calcutta Rammohun started money-lending business and appointed one Golaknarayan Sarkar as his clerk. That he lent money to distinguished officers of the East India Company, during this period of his life, is proved by the evidence of witnesses called to testify for him in the case *Govindaprasad Roy vs. Rammohun Roy*. Golaknarayan testified on the 11th May, 1819, that about twenty-one or twenty-two years ago Rammohun advanced a loan of Rs. 7500 to the Hon'ble Andrew Ramsay, a civil servant of the East India Company (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* pp. 190-91). Another witness, Gopeemohun Chatterjee who had been a Tahvildar or Cash-keeper in the service of Rammohun since the Bengali year 1208, testifying for Rammohun in the same case on the 28th September 1818, said that in the Bengali year 1209 Rammohun had lent Rs. 5000 to Thomas Woodforde another civilian of the East India Company (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* pp. 130, 137—38). From the evidences of Gopeemohun Chatterjee and Rammohun's nephew Gurudas Mukherji (a witness on Rammohun's side, examined on the 30th April and the 1st May, 1819), we further come to know that about this time Rammohun also employed himself in the business of dealing in Company's Papers (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* pp. 136, 184). On July 12, 1799 Rammohun purchased two *taluks*, Govindapur and Rameswarpur, situated in the Jahanabad and Chandrakona parganas, respectively, in the Burdwan district, West Bengal, which henceforth gave him a steady annual income of Rs. 5500 (*vide* the evidence of Rajiblochan Roy, given in the same case on behalf of Rammohun on the 20th April, 1819 in Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* pp 168-72). A few months after the purchase of the *taluks*, Rammohun left Calcutta for Patna, Benares and other far away places in northern India. Before his departure, he entrusted the management of his newly

purchased estates to his friend Rajiblochan Roy, an influential Zamindar of Burdwan. An agreement was made to the effect that in case of his death abroad, his nephew Gurudas Mukherji would inherit the said *taluks* (*vide* Exhibit B in the case *Govindaprasad Roy vs. Rammohun Roy* ; Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* Appendix I p. 525). Rammohun had as yet no issue ; his eldest son Radhaprasad is generally supposed to have been born about July, 1800, six months after the execution of this Deed of Agreement. There is however some controversy as to the year of Radhaprasad's birth. Rajiblochan Roy testifying on behalf of Rammohun, in the case *Govindaprasad Roy vs. Rammohun Roy*, said that Radhaprasad was born in 1207 B. S. (i.e. 1800) ; while Gurudas Mukherji, Rammohun's nephew, in course of his evidence, on behalf of Rammohun in the same case, gave the year of Radhaprasad's birth as 1208 B. S. (i.e. 1801-1802). (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* pp. 172, 186). Rammohun's stay in upper India must have been short. He returned to Calcutta probably towards the end of the year 1800. In 1801 he made the acquaintance of Mr. John Digby, one of his best friends and well-wishers among Englishmen. The latter was then studying in the College of Fort William, Calcutta. Rammohun seems to have been intimately connected about this time with the *Sadar Diwani Adalat* and the *College of Fort William*. The *Kazi-ul-Kazzat* (chief Kāji) of the *Sadar Diwani Adalat* and the *Maulavis* of the Fort William College were friendly to him and had a high opinion of his character and abilities. (Chanda and Mazumdar *Letters and Documents* p. 43). In March 1803 we find Rammohun holding the post of *Dewan* under Mr. Thomas Woodforde, Collector of Dacca-Jalalpore (modern Faridpur in East Pakistan). He however resigned that post on the 14th May, 1803 presumably on hearing of his father's serious illness and proceeded to Burdwan via Calcutta. (See Brajendranath Banerji *Rammohun Roy* pp. 21-22 ; Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* pp. 27, 30). It will thus be seen that Rammohun could not possibly have stayed for ten or twelve years at Benares during his journey to upper India, as supposed by William Adam. His stay there must have been much shorter.

## V

Mr. Brajendranath Banerji thinks that Rammohun was not present by his father's bed-side at the time of the latter's death. (*Rammohun Roy* p. 22). Mr. Adam's graphic personal testimony however cannot be easily ignored. Mr. Prabhat Chandra Ganguli supports Mr. Adam's statement with good arguments. (See his *Rammohun Prasāṅga* pp. 33-38).



## CHAPTER II

( 1803—1814 )

### THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

Rammohun publishes his first work. *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin*,  
or *A Gift to Monotheists*.

He enters the Bengal Civil Service.

1805, May 9. Mr. John Digby becomes Registrar at  
Ramgarh.

1808, June 15. Mr. Digby becomes Registrar at Bhagalpur.

1809, Oct. 20. Mr. Digby becomes Collector at Rangpur.

1811. Death of Jagamohun Roy and suttee of his  
widow. Rammohun's vow.

1812. Birth of Rammohun's second son, Rama-  
prasad Roy.

1814. Rammohun takes up his residence in  
Calcutta.<sup>1</sup>

Relieved from the fear of paining his father Rammohun soon began to make his heresies known to the world. He removed to Murshidabad, the old Moghul capital of Bengal,<sup>2</sup> and there he published his first work, a treatise in Persian (with an Arabic preface), entitled *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin*, or *A Gift*

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1. Rammohun settled permanently in Calcutta towards the close of the year 1815. See Note II at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors*.

2. Rammohun went to Murshidabad as the private *munshi* of Mr. Thomas Woodforde who was appointed Registrar of the Appellate Court of Murshidabad from the 11th August, 1803 (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* p. xxxvii).

—*Editors*.

to Monotheists. This was a bold protest against the idolatrous element in all established religions,\* the drift of the treatise being that while all religions are based on one common foundation, viz., the belief—justified by the facts,—in One Supreme Being who has created and sustains the whole universe,—they all differ in the details of the superstructure erected thereupon,—these superstructures being all equally unjustified by any basis of fact, and arising solely from the imagination of men working *in vacuo*. The treatise bears many traces of Rammohun's Patna training, being written in an abstruse style, and abounding with Arabic logical and philosophical terms. Its arrangement is, however, quite unsystematic, and the whole is merely a series of descriptive sketches; but these show much acuteness of observation and reasoning, and are pervaded by a strong tinge of that bitter earnestness which results from the long suppression of intense feeling. The author writes as though he

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\* By a very natural mistake, the subject of this treatise was long supposed, in England, to form its actual title, and the essay was always designated by the name—"Against the Idolatry of all Religions". No translation of this treatise appears to have been made until quite recently, when it was rendered into English by a learned and enthusiastic Mahomedan. The full title of his pamphlet is as follows :—*Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin*, or, *A Gift to Deists*, by the late Rajah Rammohun Roy, translated into English by Maulavi Obaidullah El Obaide, Superintendent of the Dacca Government Madrassa, and published under the auspices of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta, 1884. (The Arabic-Persian text of the *Tuhfat* and the English translation of Maulavi Obaidullah, have been reprinted by the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta; the *English translation* in 1949 and the *text* in 1950.—*Editors*.)



had been obliged to stand by and witness a number of priestly impositions which he could not hinder and was prevented from exposing ; and no doubt this had really been the case. The treatise is important as the earliest available expression of his mind, and as showing his eagerness to bear witness against established error but it is too immature to be worth reproducing as a whole. A few passages only are worth quoting as indications of what he was at this early period.

It may be seen that the followers of certain religions believe that the Creator has made mankind for the performance of the duties bearing on our present and future life by observing the precepts of that particular religion ; and that the followers of other religions who differ from them are liable to punishment and torment in the future life. And as the members of each particular sect defer the good results of their own acts and the bad results of their rivals' acts to the life after death none of them can refute the dogmas of others in this life. Consequently they sow the seeds of prejudice and disunion in the hearts of each other and condemn each other to the deprivation of eternal blessings—whereas it is quite evident that all of them are living in the equal enjoyment of the external blessings of heaven, such as the light of the stars, the pleasure of the season of spring, the fall of rain, health of body, external and internal good, and other pleasures of life ; and that all are equally liable to suffer from inconveniences and pains, such as gloomy darkness, severe cold, mental disease, narrow circumstances and other outward and inward evils, without any distinction, although following different religions.

The Brahmins have a tradition that they have strict orders from God to observe their ceremonies and hold their faith for ever. There are many injunctions to this effect in the Sanskrit language, and I, the humblest creature of God, having been born among them, have learnt the language and got those injunctions by heart ; and this nation having confidence therein cannot give them up, although they have been subjected to



many troubles and persecutions, and were threatened with death by the followers of Islam. The followers of Islam on the other hand, according to the purport of the holy verse of the Koran—'Kill the idolators wherever you find them. and capture the unbelievers in holy war, and after doing so either set them free by way of obligation to them or by taking ransom,'—quote authority from God that killing idolators and persecuting them in every case are obligatory by divine command. Among those idolators the Brahmins, according to the Moslem belief, are the worst. Therefore the followers of Islam, excited by religious zeal, desirous to carry out the orders of God, have done their utmost to kill and persecute the polytheists and unbelievers in the prophetic mission of the Seal of Prophets [Mohammed], and the blessing to the present and future worlds ( may the divine benediction rest on him and his disciples ). Now are these contradictory precepts or orders consistent with the wisdom and mercy of the great, generous, and disinterested Creator or are these the fabrications of the followers of religion ? I think a sound mind will not hesitate to prefer the latter alternative.

There is a saying which is often heard from teachers of different religions as an authority for their several creeds. Each of them says that his religion, which gives information about future reward or punishment after death, is either true or false. In the second case, *i. e.*, if it be false, and there be no future reward or punishment, there is no harm in believing it to be true ; while in the first case, *i. e.*, its being true, there is a great danger for unbelievers. The poor people who follow these expounders of religion, holding this saying to be a conclusive argument, always boast of it. The fact is that habit and training make men blind and deaf in spite of their own eyes and ears. The above saying is fallacious in two respects. Firstly, their saying that in the second case there is no harm in believing it to be true, is not to be admitted. For to believe in the real existence of anything after obtaining proofs of such existence is possible to every individual man ; but to put faith in the existence of such things as are remote from experience and repugnant to reason, is not in the power of a sensible man.

Secondly, entertaining a belief in these things, may become the source of various mischiefs and immoral practices, owing to gross ignorance, want of experience, bigotry, deceit, &c. And if this argument were valid, the truth of all forms of religion might be proved therefrom ; for the same arguments may equally be advanced by all. Hence there would be great perplexity for a man. He must either believe all religions to be true, or adopt one and reject the others. But as the first alternative is impossible, consequently the second must be adopted and in this case he has again to make inquiries into truth and falsehood of various religions, and this is the chief object of my discourse.

The followers of different religions, seeing the paucity of the number of Monotheists in the world, sometimes boast that they are on the side of the majority. But it may be seen that the truth of a saying does not depend upon the multitude of sayers, and the non-reliability of a narration cannot result from the small numbers of its narrators. For it is admitted by the seekers of truth, that truth is to be followed although it is against the majority of the people. Moreover, to accept the proposition that the small number of the sayers leads to the invalidity of a saying, seems to be a dangerous blow to all forms of religion. For in the beginning of every religion it had a very few supporters, viz, its founder and a few sincere followers of his, . . . while the belief in only one Almighty God is the fundamental principle of every religion.

In short, men may be divided into four classes in reference to this subject.

Ist. Deceivers who in order to attract the people to themselves, consciously invent doctrines of religious faith and cause disunion and trouble among men.

2nd. Deceived persons who, without inquiring into the facts, follow others.

3rd. Persons who are at the same time deceivers and deceived ; having themselves faith in the sayings of another, they induce others to follow his doctrines.

4th. Those who by the help of Almighty God are neither deceivers nor deceived.

These few short and useful sentences expressing the



opinion of this humble creature of God, have been written without any regard to men of prejudice and bigotry, in the hope that persons of sound mind will look thereon with eyes of justice. I have left the details to another work of mine entitled *Manazarutul Adyan*,—*Discussions on Various Religions*.

P. S. In order to avoid any future change in this book by copyists, I have had these few pages printed just after composition. Let it be known that the benediction pronounced in this book after the mention of prophets is merely done in imitation of the usual custom of the authors of Arabia and Ajam.

*The Discussions on Various Religions* above alluded to, are, unhappily, no longer procurable.<sup>3</sup> I conclude then it must have been in one of these that Rammohun made some rather sarcastic remarks on Mahomet, to which reference is made by several of his biographers as having excited an amount of anger against him among the Mahomedans which was a chief cause of his removing to Calcutta. In Mr. Leonard's *History of the Brahmo Samaj*, these sarcastic remarks are said ( p. 27 ) to occur in the *Tuhfat*, but certainly no such passage is to be found there. On the other hand it is indubitable that Rammohun always retained a large amount of sympathy with Islam for the sake of its cardinal doctrine of the Unity of God, and that he warmly appreciated the good which had thence resulted in counteracting Hindu idolatry.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Adam says that Rammohun

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3. See Note I at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors*.

4. For a scholarly discussion of Rammohun's profound erudition in the scholastic theology of the rationalist schools in Islam, see Saiyad Mujtaba Ali's Bengali article "Raja Rammohun Roy O Ilm-ul-Kālām" in the Rammohun Memorial Number of the Bengali magazine *Bhāvi Kal* (Poush 1340 B.S.) ; it has been reprinted in the *Tattvakaumudī* Vol 64, No. 1 (April 14, 1941) pp. 34-36.—*Editors*.

“seemed always pleased to have an opportunity of defending the character and teaching of Mahomet,” of whom indeed he began to write a biography which was unhappily never finished.

It must have been at this period that Rammohun Roy entered the Civil Service under the East India Company. The exact date of his doing so I have not been able to ascertain ; but ( for several reasons ) it can scarcely have been before his father's death, and it must have occurred not long after that event.<sup>5</sup> Our only contemporary information on the subject comes from Mr. John Digby, an English gentleman who was for several years Rammohun's superior officer in the Bengal Civil Service, and who during a visit to England, edited a reprint of Rammohun's translation of the *Kena Upanishad* and *Abridgment of the Vedanta* (London, 1817) to which he prefixed an interesting account of the translator. In this he said :—

Rammohun Roy...is by birth a Brahmin of very respectable origin, in the province of Bengal, about forty-three\* years of age. His acquirements are considerable : to a thorough knowledge of the Sanskrit (the language of the Brahminical Scriptures) he has added Persian and Arabic ; and possessing an acute understanding, he early conceived a contempt for the religious prejudices and absurd superstitions of his caste. At the age of twenty-two [really twenty four,

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5. See Note II at the end of the chapter.—*Editors.*

\*Had Rammohun Roy been forty-three in 1817 he would have been born in 1774. As this is the date given on his tombstone, it must have been currently accepted one time in India. But as this is indubitably two years later than the true date, all the intermediate dates of his age specified by Mr. Digby must be raised by two years.



*i.e.*, in 1796] he commenced the study of the English language, which not pursuing with application, he, five years afterwards [1801], when I became acquainted with him, could merely speak it well enough to be understood upon the most common topics of discourse, but could not write it with any degree of correctness. He was afterwards employed as Dewan, or principal native officer, in the collection of revenues, in the district of which I was for five years Collector, in the East India Company's Civil Service. By perusing all my public correspondence with diligence and attention, as well as by corresponding and conversing with European gentlemen, he acquired so correct a knowledge of the English language to be enabled to write and speak it with considerable accuracy. He was also in the constant habit of reading the English newspapers, of which the Continental politics chiefly interested him and from thence he formed a high admiration of the talents and prowess of the late ruler of France and was so dazzled with the splendour of his achievements as to become sceptical as to the commission, if not blind to the atrocity of his crimes, and could not help deeply lamenting his downfall, notwithstanding the profound respect he ever professed for the English nation ; but when the first transports of his sorrow had subsided, he considered that part of his political conduct which led to his abdication to have been so weak, and so madly ambitious, that he declared his future detestation of Buonaparte would be proportionate to his former admiration.

From a paper furnished to me by the courtesy of the India Office, I learn that Mr. Digby was never so long as five years at any station except that of Rangpur, where he served from October 20, 1809, to December<sup>6</sup>, 1814, when he returned to England for a few years. Now it is at Rangpur that popular tradition chiefly connects the name

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6. This is not correct : Mr. Digby relinquished the charge of Collectorship of Rangpur on July 20, 1814 (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* p. 44).—Editors.

of Rammohun Roy with Mr. Digby ; but as Mr. Digby was previously at Ramgarh (1805 to 1808)<sup>7</sup> and Bhagalpur (1808 to 1809), and as Rammohun mentions in his evidence on the Burdwan law-suit having resided at “Ramgarh, Bhagalpur, and Rangpur”, it is highly probable that he was working under Mr. Digby in the two former localities before he went to Rangpur ; although we have no details as to the successive posts which he then occupied.<sup>8</sup>

It is usually stated by Rammohun’s biographers that “a written agreement was signed by Mr. Digby to the effect that Rammohun should never be kept standing (a custom enforced by European Civil Servants towards natives of the highest rank) in the presence of the Collector, and that no order should be issued to him as a mere Hindu functionary”. So far as I can trace, this statement first appeared in a letter by Mr. R. Montgomery Martin (in whose words I have quoted it) in the *Court Journal* of October 5, 1833, just after Rammohun’s death. So many statements in that letter are undoubtedly erroneous that I can feel no assurance as to the fact of this written agreement. There can, however, be no doubt that Mr. Digby held Rammohun in high regard, and that a sincere friendship existed between them, honourable alike to both.

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7. This is not correct. Mr. Digby came to Jessore (now in East Pakistan), as Collector from Ramgarh on December 23, 1807 ; from Jessore, he went to Bhagalpur as Registrar of the Bhagalpur Court. (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* pp. 40-41).—Editors.

8. See Note II at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.



Mr. G. S. Leonard in his *History of the Brahmo Samaj*, based on a MS. work by a highly respected member of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, makes the following statement :—

The permanent settlement of Zemindaries under Lord Cornwallis in 1793, and its ratification by the Court of Directors, some three years after, required a general survey and assessment of all lands in Bengal under European collectors, some of whom were empowered with the settlement of several districts at once. Mr. Digby had the charge of settling the districts of Rangpur, Dinajpur and Purnea, a work which kept him employed for three years, and in the execution of which he gained a lasting renown in the memory of the people for justice and probity, a result which is mainly due to the exertions of his *Dewān*.

Pandit Sivanath Śāstrī mentions in his excellent, but unfortunately unpublished, *History of the Brahmo Samaj*,<sup>9</sup> that the state of things in the above mentioned districts of Northern Bengal,

“... was especially complicated. Here there were many powerful landlords who had a large number of unsettled disputes, and almost every individual case of settlement involved the examination of a variety of records and documents and the consideration of conflicting claims. In many cases there were no documents whatever to substantiate the claims of actual owners of land, and they required personal attendance and local inquiry from the settlement officer. In settlement work in those days, the trusted native Sheristadars were, as a rule, the chief agents employed by the Collectors, who were guided to a large extent by their decisions and counsels.”<sup>10</sup>

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9. The work has been subsequently published from Calcutta in two volumes, the first volume in 1911 and the second a year later. Here the reference is to Vol. I. pp. 20-21.  
—Editors.

10. See Note III at the end of the Chapter—Editors.

Mr. Leonard enumerates as Rammohun's special qualifications of this work, his "proficiency in zemindary accounts and land surveying," "his acquaintance with all the cunning and dishonest devices of the Amins and Amlahs in furnishing false accounts and statements," and also "the practical reforms he suggested regarding the ascertaining of rightful ownerships and descriptions of land, &c.". I have not been able to procure any original documents of this period which could fix dates and events; but the above summaries come from reliable sources and may be accepted as genuine.<sup>11</sup>

From all accounts, it was during his residence in Rangpur that Rammohun first began to assemble his friends together for evening discussions on religious subjects, especially on the untenableness and absurdities of idolatry. Rangpur was then a place of considerable resort, and among its inhabitants were a good many merchants from Marwar in Rajputana, Jains by faith. Some of these Marwaris used to attend Rammohun's meetings, and Mr. Leonard says that "he had to learn on their account the *Kalpa-Sūtra*, and other books appertaining to the Jaina religion," and adds :—

He met, however, with much opposition from a counter party headed by Gaurikanta Bhattacharya, a learned Persian and Sanskrit scholar, who challenged him in a Bengali book entitled the *Gyan Chandrika*<sup>12</sup>. This man was Dewan to the

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11. See Note IV at the end of the Chapter—*Editors*.

12. This is a mistake. The name of the book is *Jñanānjana*. It was first published in 1821. A revised second edition was published from Calcutta in 1838. A copy of the second edition is in the Library of the *Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Parishad* (General Catalogue No. 2212)—*Editors*.



Judge's Court at Rangpur, and his influence enabled him to gather a large body of men about him whom he hounded on to Rammohun Roy, but without any success.

A far more serious hostility was that of his mother. As already mentioned, the family estate passed at Ramkanta Roy's death in 1803, into the hands of his eldest son, Jagamohun. He died in 1811.<sup>13</sup> To whom it then passed, I have sought in vain to discover. Certainly it did not go to Rammohun Roy ; yet a few years later we find him in possession of it, and his mother bringing suits against him to depeive him of the property on the ground of his dissent from the current religion.<sup>14</sup> I have not succeeded hitherto in obtaining any published report of these, but the following passage from William Adam leaves no doubt as to their reality.

When the death of Rammohun Roy's elder brother made him the head of the family, she [his mother] instituted suits against her son both in the King's and Company's Courts, with a view to disinherit him as an apostate and infidel, which according to strict Hindu law, excludes from the present and disqualifies for the future, possession of any ancestral property, or even according to many authorities, of any property that is self-acquired.

In this attempt she was defeated ; but for many years he had much to suffer from her persecution. In his great grandson's *Anecdotes* there is a story of his going to see her on returning from

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13. This is not correct. Jagamohun Roy died in March-April 1812 (Chaitra 1218 B. S.). (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* p. 64.)—Editors.

14. See Note V at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.

Rangpur, and being harshly repulsed from her embrace, when she is reported to have said,—“If you would touch me, you must first go and bow down before my Rādhā and Govinda”; whereupon, it is added, “Rammohun, who so loved his mother, submitted and went to the house of the gods and said—“I bow down before my mother’s god and goddess.” If this be true, it can scarcely have been done so as to impose seriously on his mother, for he never relaxed in his public attitude towards idolatry. But the anecdote may stand as a half-mythical illustration of the great reluctance with which he opposed his parents’ faith. Another of these anecdotes tells of his mother’s anger because, when in bad health, he had by his doctor’s advice, taken some broth made from goat’s flesh.<sup>15</sup> On this occasion, it is said, she raised a great disturbance, and adjured the family thus:—“Be careful! Rammohun has turned Christian, and has begun to eat forbidden things. Let us all unite and drive him from my ground; wholesale ruin has begun!” This would seem to imply that he still held some footing in Burdwan, and did not reside entirely at Rangpur during the whole of Mr. Digby’s five years there (1809 to 1814). Probably his family still remained in the ancestral neighbourhood. At any rate, it is clear that owing to his mother’s hostility, he had to remove them. But the whole of Krishnagar belonged

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15. For the details of this incident see Nagendranath Chatterjee’s *Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rāyer Jiban-charit* in Bengali (Fifth Edition, Indian Press, Allahabad, 1928) pp. 495-96 note—*Editors*.



to her, and she would not let him have any land there for his own. He therefore took up his quarters on a large burning ground at the village of Raghunathpur not far off, and there he built a house for himself.<sup>16</sup>

It must have been during this period that one of his hostile neighbours, named Ramjay Batabyal, an inhabitant of the village of Ramnagar near Krishnagar, resorted to a curious mode of persecution. He collected a number of men who used to go to Rammohun's house early in the morning and imitate the crowing of cocks, and again at nightfall to throw cow-bones into the house. These proceedings greatly annoyed and disturbed Rammohun's womankind, but he himself took it with perfect coolness, and made no retort whatever, which enraged his persecutors all the more. At last, however, finding him hopelessly impervious, they wearied of their attacks and desisted therefrom.

With respect to the family estate, which probably passed at the death of Jagamohun Roy to his son, Govindaprasad Roy, it has been suggested to me by one of Rammohun's descendants that Govinda-Prasad may have failed to continue the payment of the land tax, in which case the estate would have been thrown into the market ; and that Rammohun, who had by that time saved money in Government Service, may have bought it in. Certainly he came into possession of it while his mother still lived. It would appear, however, that after he had established his right to the property, he did not at

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16. See Note V at the end of the Chapter—*Editors*.

once take possession of it, from reluctance to pain his relatives, and that “for sometime everything remained as before in the hands of his mother.”<sup>17</sup> She taking up the superintendence of the land under her own care, managed the affairs most successfully. ...It is said that Phulthakurani used to place before her all her numerous gods and goddesses while superintending the management of her landed property.”\*

It is always stated by Rammohun’s biographers that in his ten years’ Government Service he saved enough money to enable him to become a zemindar or landowner, with an annual income of Rs. 10,000 ( about £ 1, 000 ). Commenting on this fact, Babu Kishorychand Mitra, in a long and elaborate sketch of Rammohun which appeared in the *Calcutta Review* of December, 1845, insinuates that such gains raise the suspicion that he “sold justice.” ‘If’, he says, “Rammohun Roy did keep his hands clean, and abstained as in the absence of all positive evidence to the contrary we are bound to suppose,

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17. See Note V at the end of the Chapter. Rammohun’s mother appears to have been an extremely proud and spirited lady in the prime of her life. See the interesting reminiscences of Rammohun’s grand-daughter Chandrajyoti Devi as recorded by Sm. Hemlata Devi a great great-grand-daughter of Rammohun in the *Father of Modern India* (Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume) Part II pp. 282-84.—Editors.

\* Some Anecdotes from the Life of Raja Rammohun Roy, by Nanda Mohun Chatterji, Calcutta, 1287 Sal (1881, A.D.). (The book is in Bengali, its Bengali title being *Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rāya Sammandhiya Kshudra Kshudra Galpa*.—Editors).



from defeating the ends of justice for a consideration, he must have been a splendid exception." Mr. Leonard in his *History of the Brahmo Samaj*, refutes these unworthy suspicions by pointing out that "If Kishorychand had possessed any knowledge of the duties of a dewan in those early days and the legal perquisites appertaining to the office recognised by Government," he would not have been entitled to wonder at Rammohun Roy's gains. "It is no great achievement to amass by frugality and thrift a lakh of rupees after ten years' service, the value of a dependent Taluk of Rs. 10,000, when others have been known by a service of half or a quarter that time, to have made a provision of ten times that amount." Mr. Leonard also remarks that "had Mr. Digby's dewan been so corrupt as he is suspected to have been, Mr. Digby himself would never have obtained renown for justice and probity." But the insinuations of K. C. Mitra, though admittedly made "in the absence of all positive evidence," have unhappily been repeated from the early memoir by later writers, and were reproduced so lately as 1888 in the *Saturday Review*. So difficult is it to rectify a false impression once given.<sup>18</sup>

Mr. Digby left Rangpur for England at the end of 1814; and in the course of that year Rammohun took up his residence in Calcutta.<sup>19</sup>

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18. See Note VI at the end of the Chapter—*Editors*.

19. This is not correct. Rammohun finally returned to Calcutta at least not earlier than November 1815. See Note II at the end of the Chapter. During his stay at Rangpur, he however paid occasional visits to Calcutta and his native village Langulpara.—*Editors*.

But previous to doing so, he seems to have been living for a short interval at his house on the burning-ground at Raghunathpur. In front of this house he erected a *mancha* or pulpit, for the purpose of worship and engraved upon each of its sides three mottos from the Upanishads : (1) “*Om*” (*aum*)—the most venerable and solemn designation of the Hindu Trinity.; (2) “*Tat Sat*,” That (*i. e.*, He) is Truth ; and (3) “*Ekamevādvītyam*,— The One without a second. Here he offered his prayers thrice a day ; and on going home, and on again returning to Calcutta, he would first walk round this *mancha*, said to be still standing<sup>20</sup>. It was in reference to this *mancha* that his youngest wife, Uma, is said to have asked him which religion was the best and highest ? Rammohun is said to have replied : “Cows are of different colours, but the colour of the milk they give, is the same. Different teachers have different opinions, but the essence of every religion is to adopt the true path,”—*i. e.*, to live a faithful life.

One other family event in this preparatory period of Rammohun’s life must be chronicled here. At the death of his eldest brother Jagamohun in 1811<sup>21</sup> the widow became a Suttee. It is said that Rammohun had endeavoured to persuade her beforehand against this terrible step, but in vain. When, however, she felt the flames she tried to get up and escape from the pile ; but her orthodox relations and the priests forced her down with bamboo poles, and kept her there to die, while drums and brazen instruments were loudly sounded to

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20. It is no longer to be seen.—*Editors*.

21. Should be 1812, See foot-note 13 above.—*Editors*.



drown her shrieks. Rammohun, unable to save her, and filled with unspeakable indignation and pity, vowed within himself then and there, that he would never rest until the atrocious custom was rooted out.\* And he kept his vow. Before 19 years had fully elapsed, that pledge was redeemed by the Government decree abolishing Suttee, Dec. 4. 1829.

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\* For this anecdote we are indebted to Babu Rajnarayan Bose, who learnt the fact from his father, an esteemed disciple of Rammohun Roy. See Nagendranath Chatterjee's *Life of R. M. Roy* (Calcutta 1880) p. 23. (The reference is to the Bengali biography entitled *Mahatma Raja Rammohan Rāyer Jiban-charit* by Nagendranath Chatterjee. The page reference in the latest i.e. in the 5th edition published in 1928 would be pp. 26-27. Mr. Brajendranath Banerji has questioned the authenticity of the incident. ( *Rammohun Roy* pp. 33-35 ). Mr. Prabhat Chandra Ganguli supports Miss Collet's statement with good arguments. See his *Rammohun-Prasaṅga* pp. 45-52. See also Note VII at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.)

## SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES TO CHAPTER II

### I

No copy of Rammohun's earlier work '*Monazaratul Adiyān*' (presumably written in Persian or like the *Tuhfat* partly in Arabic and partly in Persian) alluded to, in the *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin* has as yet come to light. Mr. Brajendranath Banerji who had no access to the original Persian text of the *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin* expressed the opinion that Rammohun never actually published the *Monazaratul Adiyān* though he might have contemplated the writing of such a work (Rammohun Roy pp. 81-82). Kazi Abdul Odood however has pointed out after a detailed study of the *original* text of the *Tuhfat* that from the nature of the reference to the *Monazarat* to be found in the former, it appears that the *Monazarat* was circulated among the public either in manuscript or in printed form. (See his illuminating article on the *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin* in the *Tattvakaumudi* Vol. 77, No. 9 pp. 67-70). In this connection we should note that elsewhere Rammohun refers to a treatise in Arabic and Persian composed by him "at a very early period of his life". In the preface to his *An Appeal to the Christian Public* (Calcutta 1820) he writes : "With respect to the latter mode of seeking evidence, however unjustified the Editor may be in coming to such a conclusion, he is safe in ascribing the collection of these Precepts to Rammohun Roy ; who although he was born a Brahman, not only renounced idolatry at a very early period of his life, but published at the same time a treatise in Arabic and Persian against that system ;..." (*The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* edited by Kalidas Nag and Debajyoti Burman, Part V p. 58). The *Tuhfat* was published in 1803-04 when Rammohun was about thirty or thirty-two years of age. For this reason it cannot by any means be regarded as having been written *at a very early period* of Rammohun's life. It would therefore appear to one, following this line of argument, that the above reference in the preface to the *Appeal* may be



to any early Arabic-Persian work of Rammohun, *other than the Tuhfat*. The question however is still not free from difficulties. We cannot explain why as late as in 1820, Rammohun mentions only one book written by him in Arabic and Persian and not more. It certainly creates the impression that he was speaking of the *Tuhfat* which had been published probably in 1803 or 1804. Further Gaurikanta Bhattacharya, Rammohun's learned adversary at Rangpur seems also to refer to *one* Arabic-Persian treatise of Rammohun without mentioning its title, in his own work *Jñānānjana* in Bengali (first published in 1821), though it may be conceded that the reference is a little obscure and may admit of different meanings (*Jñānānjana* 2nd. ed., Calcutta 1838. p. 3). It seems, we cannot hope to solve the problem finally in the present imperfect state of our knowledge. The British Museum Library possesses a booklet entitled *Javab-i-Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin* which is "an anonymous defence of Rammohun Roy's *Tuhfat*...against the attacks of the Zoroastrians" and was published from Calcutta (1820 ?) (*A Catalogue of the Persian Printed Books in the British Museum* compiled by E. Edwards, London 1922, p. 623). Considering Rammohun's habit of publishing his writings anonymously, the authorship of this booklet may be tentatively ascribed to him.

It should be noted here that the two verses from the *Koran* quoted by Rammohun in the *Tuhfat* (see above p. 20), are interpreted differently by some modern scholars. Muhammad Ali, for example, points out that the first verse in question (*Koran* IX. 1. 5.) does not refer to a general massacre of all polytheists and idolators (i.e. all non-Muslims) but it speaks only of *those non-Muslims who were waging war at the time with the Muslims treacherously by breaking a previous agreement* (*The Holy Qur-ān* 2nd. ed., Lahore 1920, p. 397, note 1032). As to the second verse (*Koran* XLVII. 1. 4.) the same scholar says : "The passage mentions the only case in which prisoners of war can be taken and thus condemns the practice of slavery according to which men could be seized everywhere, and sold into slavery." The teaching of the *Koran* according to this interpretation, is here directed against the indiscriminate making of slaves (*The Holy Qur-ān* p. 975, note 2294).

It is also well to keep in mind that modern critics like Dr. Brajendranath Seal and Kazi Abdul Odood do not agree with Miss Collet's view that the *Tuhfat* is an immature piece of writing. They assign a high place to it in the history of the development of Rammohun's thought. See Brajendranath Seal *Rammohun Roy: The Universal Man* Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta, pp. 9-10; Kazi Abdul Odood *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahiddin* in the *Tattavakaumudi* vol. 77. No. 9. pp. 67-70.

## II

In the year 1805 Rammohun entered the service of Mr. John Digby and accompanied him successively to Ramgarh (then the headquarters of the Hazaribagh district, Bihar), Jessore (at present in East Pakistan), Bhagalpur (in Bihar) and Rangpur (in North Bengal, at present in East Pakistan). In May 1805 Mr. Digby was appointed Registrar of the office of the Magistrate of Ramgarh and Rammohun served him there first in the capacity of private *munshi*. Here Rammohun had his first acting service under the East India Company. He served as the *Sherishtadar* of the Fauzdari Court for a period of three months when Mr. Digby officiated as the magistrate of that district. At Jessore and at Bhagalpur too Rammohun was apparently in the private service of Mr. Digby. During his stay at Bhagalpur an incident occurred which brought about a conflict between Rammohun and Sir Frederick Hamilton, the Collector of that district. In the early days of British rule some of the East India Company's officers loved to enforce the practice of the earlier Muslim ruling class, of not permitting ordinary people to ride horses or palanquins or to use umbrellas before a state dignitary. On the day of his arrival at Bhagalpur, Rammohun happened to pass through a road in the town, in his palanquin while Sir Frederick was standing near by. The haughty British officer at once shouted at the occupant of the palanquin, asking him very rudely to get down and walk on foot. Rammohun was not the man to stand such insolence. He at once protested politely but firmly against the



indecorous conduct of Sir Frederick. His arguments failing to pacify the officer, Rammohun defied the former's anger and passed in his palanquin as before. Subsequently on the 12th. April, 1809 Rammohun sent a petition to Lord Minto, the Governor-General, against the insulting behaviour of Sir Frederick Hamilton as a result of which the latter was censured. (For the incident and the text of Rammohun's petition, see Brajendranath Banerji *Rammohun Roy* pp. 24—28). The entire incident is an instance of the dignified courage and keen sense of self-respect which marked Rammohun throughout his life.

Rammohun came to Rangpur with Mr. Digby when the latter was appointed Collector of that district on October 20, 1809. Mr. Digby continued to hold that post till he was relieved of it on the 20th July 1814. (Regarding Mr. Digby's service under the E. I. Co. during this period, see Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* pp. xxxvii—xxxix, 40—46). After having taken charge of the collectorship of Rangpur Mr. Digby probably from November 1809, appointed Rammohun as *dewan* on temporary basis but the Board of Revenue at Calcutta refused to sanction the appointment on the ground of Rammohun's inexperience and also of the fact that the sureties provided by him consisted of two Zamindars belonging to the locality (district of Rangpur). So inspite of the best efforts of Mr. Digby including an assurance that Rammohun was ready to procure securities from districts other than Rangpur to any amount that might be required, Rammohun had to quit the office of *dewan* for the time-being, probably in March 1810. (The correspondence between Mr. Digby and the Board on the question of the appointment of Rammohun, may be read in Mr. Jyotirmoy Dasgupta's article 'Raja Rammohun Roy at Rangpur' in the *Modern Review* September 1928, pp. 274-78 and also in Chanda and Majumder *Letters and Documents* Nos. 70, 71, 72 and 73, pp. 41-44). Mr. Brajendranath Banerji seems to think that during the remaining years of his stay at Rangpur Rammohun was primarily holding a private job under Mr. Digby besides having been appointed by the latter, guardian of the minor proprietors of the estate of the late Rajkishore Chaudhuri

of Udasi, in August, 1810. According to him Rammohun retained the last-mentioned post till February 1815. "It is quite clear", he says in this connection, "that Rammohun's residence in Calcutta dates from the early part of 1815 and not from 1814 as is generally supposed". (See his article "Rammohun Roy in the Service of the East India Company" in the *Modern Review* May 1930, pp. 570-76) Mr. Banerji however clearly contradicts himself in his subsequent Bengali pamphlet on Rammohun Roy where he says that Rammohun became a permanent resident of Calcutta *from the middle of the year 1814* (Rammohun Roy p. 35)! His conclusions regarding Rammohun's official status at Rangpur after his temporary removal from *dewanship* and the date of Rammohun's final departure from Rangpur, have now been definitely proved wrong by subsequent discovery of fresh materials throwing light upon the subject. Dr. Surendranath Sen has unearthed a number of old Bengali letters belonging to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, from the National Archives of India and has published a critical edition of these. The letters include the official correspondence (or at least a part of it) that passed between the contemporary governments of Bhutan and Cooch-Bihar and the British authorities at Calcutta and Rangpur. Four letters of this series mention Rammohun Roy. (See *Prāchin Bānglā Patra Saṅkalan* edited by Dr. Surendranath Sen and published by the University of Calcutta, 1942, Nos. 117, 128, 139 (c) and 140 ; pp. 140-41 ; 152 ; 167-69 ; for the English synopses of the letters, see the English section of the book pp. 50 ; 56 ; 63-65). The letters bear the following dates : (a) No. 117 is from the 'Devārājā' (prime-minister) of Bhutan to the Munshi Bahadur (Persian Secretary ?) of Calcutta and was received on the 18th August 1812 ; (b) No. 128 is from the Raja of Cooch-Bihar to the Commissioner of Cooch-Bihar (Mr. Norman Macleod) and was received on the 9th May 1814 ; (c) No. 139 (c) is a representation of Chitā Tundu and Chitā Tashi, *Zinkafs* (carriers of letter) on behalf of the Devarājā and is dated the 8th Aswin 1222 B.S. ; and (d) No. 140 is from the Raja of Bhutan to the Magistrate of Rangpur and was received on the 12th November 1815. It is clearly indicated in these letters that in 1815 Rammohun along with Krishnakanta Basu



was sent as an envoy of the British Government to Bhutan in order to settle the boundary disputes between the kingdoms of Bhutan and Cooch-Behar. We also come to know from the same sources that Rammohun visited the Cooch-Behar-Bhutan border in the company of Mr. Digby in 1812 and possibly also in 1809. In these *official letters* Rammohun is referred to as the *dewan* of the Collector of Rangpur. It is also clear that even after the departure of Mr. Digby in 1814, from Rangpur Rammohun was employed in *official* capacity as an envoy by Mr. Scott, the next Collector of Rangpur as late as in November 1815. It therefore appears certain that not long after his temporary removal from *dewan-ship* Rammohun was reinstated as *dewan* at Rangpur by the Board of Revenue. The confidence of the authorities in his ability and integrity was so great that he was selected as one of the envoys to settle the frontier disputes of a neighbouring state and served the government in this capacity till at least the end of the year 1815. He visited Punākḥ, the Bhutanese capital via Goalpara, Bijni, Sidli, Cherang and the Pachumachu valley. That he enjoyed the confidence of the Bhutanese Government is indicated by the request conveyed by the Devarājā in latter No. 140, to Mr. Scott, that in case the latter could not come himself Rammohun Roy should be sent again to Bhutan. It is strange, as Dr. Sen has pointed out, that later on Sir Ashely Eden and Captain Pemberton have mentioned only Krishnakanta Basu (also a highly able man) in connection with the Bhutanese Mission of 1815. Did Rammohun then visit Bhutan as Dr. Sen seems to think, as the assistant of Krishnakanta Basu? It is significant however that in the letters of the Devarājā, Rammohun's name is always mentioned before that of Krishnakanta. According to diplomatic etiquette priority of mention would imply superiority in rank. If the story of Rammohun's earlier visit to Tibet is true, as it very probably is, the diplomatic mission to Punākḥ may be regarded as his second visit to Tibetan territories, as Bhutan during this period formed part of the kingdom of Tibet. A journey to Bhutan was extremely difficult in those days and only two Englishmen, George Bogle and Captain Turner visited this nearly inaccessible

country before Rammohun Roy and Krishnakanta Basu. (For a thorough discussion see Surendranath Sen *Prāchin Bānglā Patra-Saṅkalan* Introduction pp. 48-51). It is permissible to imagine that the Bhutanese Mission of 1815 laid the foundation of Rammohun's subsequent reputation as a diplomat. According to the evidence of the above documents Rammohun's final return to Calcutta from Rangpur could not possibly have taken place before about the end of the year 1815.

### III

Here as elsewhere, Pandit Śāstri seems to have confused the functions of a *sherishtadar* with those of the *dewan*. See for example his *Ramtanu Lahiri O Tatkalin Vanga Samaj* (2nd Ed) p. 60, where he refers to Rammohun as the "*sherishtadar or dewan*" of Mr. Digby at Rangpur. A *sherishtadar* in the early days of the Company's rule was mainly "a registrar or a record-keeper". The designation was applied "especially to the head native officer of a court of justice or collector's office" who had "the general superintendence of the establishment and charge of the public records and official documents and papers". (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* p. 559). The term *dewan* has a wide and changing connotation in Indian administrative history (Moreland *The Agrarian System of Moslem India* New Reprint, Allahabad, pp. xiv-xv, 271). In the present context it stands for the principal Indian officer of the revenue department, under the Collector of a district. The post of *dewan* was the highest that an Indian could hold under the East India Company's Government. The Collectors were "guided to a large extent" by the "decisions and counsels" of the *dewan* and not of the *sherishtadar*. The salary of the *dewan* could be as high as one hundred and fifty sicca rupees a month, whereas that of a *sherishtadar* was ordinarily between forty to fifty sicca rupees per month. During the period he was in the service of the East India Company at Rangpur, Rammohun worked as *dewan* and not as *sherishtadar*. Previously



he had served for a term about three months as *sherishtadar* at Ramgarh. See above p. 37. The new edition of V. A. Smith's *Oxford History of India* (edited by T. G. Spears, Oxford 1958) also wrongly describes Rammohun as the *sheristadar* of Mr. Digby at Rangpur (pp. 651-52).

#### IV

Most of these documents can now be read in the following publications : (a) Jyotirmoy Dasgupta, "Raja Rammohun Roy at Rangpur" *The Modern Review*, September 1928, pp. 274-78 ; (b) Brajendranath Banerji "Rammohun Roy in the Service of the East India Company" *The Modern Review* May 1930 pp. 570-76 ; (c) Ramaprasad Chanda and J. K. Majumdar 'Selections from Official Letters and Documents Relating to The Life of Raja Rammohun Roy' (Calcutta 1938), Nos. 44, 45, 49, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74 and 75, pp. 27-44. These now help us to fix dates and events of this period with a fair amount of certainty though we must regretfully admit that our knowledge is still not altogether without gaps. See also Note II above pp. 37-41.

#### V

The original records connected with the law-suits brought against Rammohun Roy were not available to Miss Collet. Recently however these have been collected, edited and published in a volume entitled *Selections from the Official Letters and Documents Relating to the Life of Raja Rammohun Roy* (Calcutta 1938) by Sri Ramaprasad Chanda and Dr. J. K. Majumdar. These letters and documents belong to the Revenue and Judicial Departments of the Government of (undivided) Bengal. Many of these records have no doubt been consulted and utilised previously by individual writers and investigators but Messrs. Chanda and Majumdar deserve great credit for having provided the reading public for the first time with a collection of all relevant source materials throwing light on

this phase of Rammohun's life. It serves as an indispensable source-book and enables enquirers to understand the true nature of the law-suits in which Rammohun was involved.

From the account left by Dr. Carpenter and Rev. William Adam one gets the impression that after the death of his father Ramkanta in 1803, and elder brother Jagamohun in 1812, Rammohun became the head of the family but his mother Tarini Devi "instituted suits against her son both in the King's and Company's courts *with a view to disinherit him as an apostate and infidel*",..... . Miss Collet has accepted these conclusions in toto. She thinks that a few years after the death of Jagamohun, the family estate passed from the possession of the latter's son Govindaprasad to that of Rammohun who might have 'bought it in' as Govindaprasad possibly 'failed to continue the payment of the land-tax'. She further suggests that after Rammohun had established his right to the property he did not at once take possession of it and for sometime at least his mother Tarini Devi continued to manage it. While the records of the law-suits lend general support to the contentions of Carpenter and Adam that the suits were instituted against Rammohun in order to disinherit him of his property on the 'ground of Rammohun's "apostacy and infidelity"', Miss Collet's assumptions regarding Rammohun's connection with his family estate, are without any basis. The records of the law-suits brought against Rammohun by his nephew Govindaprasad and his brother Jagamohun's widow Durga Devi, are now fortunately available to us and these throw a flood of light on the problem concerned. We shall therefore give a brief account of these cases here.

Govindaprasad Roy filed a suit in the Equity Division of the Supreme Court on the 23rd June, 1817, laying claim to the entire property, movable and immovable, belonging to Rammohun Roy, as the "only son, heir and legal personal representative of Jagamohun Roy." In the Bill of Complaint, Govindaprasad referred to the deed of partition executed by Ramkanta Roy in 1796 and stated that when Jagamohun, Rammohun and Ramlochan took possession of the shares allotted to each of them by their father, Rammohun Roy separated himself from the family and went and



lived apart. But Ramkanta, Jagamohun and Rammohun immediately or shortly after the partition reunited and lived together as a joint Hindu family till the deaths of Ramkanta in 1803 and Jagomohan in 1812. After his father's death Govindprasad continued to live with Rammohun Roy jointly at Langulpara till the 27th January 1817 when Rammohun removed to his newly built house in the adjoining village of Raghunathpur. Govindaprasad's prayer was that the Court might declare himself entitled to half-share of the joint estate of which Rammohun was seeking to deprive him (vide "Govindaprasad's Bill of Complaint," Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* No. 98, pp. 63-70 ; see also Introduction to the same pp. xlv—xlvi). Rammohun's answer as defendant is missing from the original file but a summary of it is incorporated in the judgment delivered by the Court on the 10th December 1819 (*Letters and Documents* No. 131 ; for the summary of Rammohun's answer see particularly pp. 255-72). It is quite clear from Rammohun's answer as well as from the cross interrogatories prepared on his behalf to be administered to the witnesses for the prosecution, that Rammohun's defence was that he had been living in complete separation from his relatives due to his difference from them over religious and social questions and the property which he had been enjoying, had been earned *solely* by his *individual endeavours*. On this ground he refused to entertain any claims to the effect that the property enjoyed by him was joint property. From the testimonies of witnesses Guruprasad Roy and Ramtanu Roy, cousins of Rammohun, on behalf of the latter (Vide *Letters and Documents* Nos. 108 and 110) it becomes very clear that the custom of brothers living separately *was current* in the Roy family *at least from a generation earlier*. Guruprasad who was the son of Nimananda Roy, a brother of Ramkanta, said in course of his evidence : " . he, this deponent, was informed by his said father Nimananda Roy, that the said Radacaunt Roy ( evidently a printing mistake for Ramcaunt or Ramkanta Roy—*Editors* ) and his said brothers had become divided many years previous to the birth of him, this deponent, and that he, this deponent, hath after seen the papers which were drawn up and executed by the said Ramkanta Roy and his said brothers at the time

when such division or partition took place and which papers are now in the possession of him, this deponent . . ." (*Letters and Documents* pp. 141-42). Ramtanu Roy stated in his evidence : "...the said Ramkanta Roy lived and resided in the village of Radhanagar in the Pargana of Jahanabad then in the Zillah of Burdwan but now in the Zillah of Hooghly where he, this deponent, first knew him. Saith that at that time his brothers Nimananda Roy, Ramkishore Roy, Gopimohun Roy and Bishnuram Roy and the descendants of his brother Radhamohun Roy and his brother Ramram Roy lived and resided in the same homestead but they *did not constitute an undivided Hindoo family with him in any respect* (italics ours—Editors). See *Letters and Documents* p. 157. It is also well-known (as admitted by Govindaprasad in his Bill of Complaint) that after Ramkanta had divided his property among his three sons, Ramlochan, the step-brother of Rammohun, separated himself from the family and lived apart. The witnesses on behalf of Rammohun in the case included his cousins Guruprasad Roy and Ramtanu Roy, nephew Gurudas Mukherjee, Rajibolochan Roy an influential Zamindar of the Burdwan district, Pandit Nandakumar Vidyalañkar more widely known as the venerable Tāntrika Sannyāsi Hariharananda Tirthasvami and six other persons including employees of Rammohun (*Letters and Documents* Nos. 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115 and 116, pp. 130—93). Their evidences succeeded in establishing that Rammohun was not living jointly with Jagamohun and the property enjoyed by the former was absolutely self-earned. It was proved that the families of Rammohun and Jagamohun lived jointly as regards food at Langulpara till the beginning of the year 1817 but during this period *they were separate in property and in everything else*. But as early as November-December 1814, Rammohun had transferred his half-share of the paternal house at Langulpara to his nephew Gurudas Mukherjee and in January-February 1817 he removed with his family to a new house which he had built in the neighbouring village of Raghunathpur (*Letters and Documents* p. xliii). "Men who had excellent opportunities of being acquainted with the affairs and concerns of the family appeared as witnesses. Rammohun Roy's first cousins and nephew...appeared as witnesses of the internal



affairs of the family. Rajiblochan Roy...who held in farm most of the taluks of Rammohun Roy, bore witness to the fact that their net income was always paid over to Rammohun Roy. The cashier of Rammohun Roy's Calcutta office stated that business was carried on there in the name of Rammohun Roy alone. Valuable documents were produced to show that Jagamohun Roy's transactions were carried on separately by himself on his own behalf. The handwriting of Jagamohun Roy on these documents was duly identified by several witnesses. (*Ibid* p. li). While Rammohun thus succeeded "in proving his case to the hilt", Govindaprasad cut rather a sorry figure in the court. Becharam Sen, one of the main witnesses of his side practically gave away the case while answering the main question at issue whether Jagamohun and Rammohun reunited and were "joint in food, property and in all other respects." His reply was, that from the date of partition (1st December 1796) to his death, Jagamohun Roy and after his death till 1223 B. S. (1816—17), his son, Govindaprasad Roy, lived with Rammohun Roy "undivided as to food *but their property alwayas continued distinct* which he, this deponent, knows from being now in the service of Govindaprasad Roy and from having seen his books (*Ibid* pp. xlvii-xlviii, 95). The evidence of three other witnesses Radhakrishna Banerjee, Ramchandra Banerji and Abhaycharan Dutta examined on behalf of Govindaprasad were of little help to the latter. (*Letters and Documents* Nos. 121 to 125, pp. 206—27). The first named admitted that "he this deponent, doth not know on what terms he, the said Rammohun Roy and Jagamohun Roy lived after the said partition and division of which he hath been speaking or whether they possessed and enjoyed their respective portions under the said division or partition severally or jointly. Saith that he never heard of any reunion between any of the said parties." (*Ibid* p. 208). Ramchandra Banerji also admitted that 'he had not the means and opportunity of knowing and being acquainted with, nor was he acquainted with the affairs and concerns of the said family during the life-time of Ramkanta Roy or since his death'. Still somehow it "appeared" to him as a joint family! (*Ibid* p. 217). The last witness claimed some acquaintance with the the affairs of the family during the life-time of Ramkanta but his

first hand knowledge ended with Ramkanta's death. According to his own admission, "he had not the like opportunity of seeing and being acquainted with the affairs and transactions of the said family after his death" (*Ibid* p. 225). Govindaprasad made desperate efforts to procure more witnesses on his side including Rammohun's mother Tarini Devi, and repeatedly prayed for time (vide *Letter and Documents* Nos. 117—118 and 127, pp. 93—97, 235—37); but inspite of subpoenas having been issued to them only five out of seventeen of these persons came to Calcutta to attend the Court. Tarini Devi was conspicuous by her absence. Govindaprasad Roy had also petitioned to the Court to be allowed to conduct the case as a pauper (*in forma pauperis*) on the 24th August 1819 (vide *Letters and Documents* No. 121, pp. 203—04). The prayer was initially granted by the Court (*Ibid* p. 205). But Rammohun succeeded in proving by producing seven witnesses that Govindaprasad was at that time enjoying landed property amounting in value to about twelve thousand sicca rupees and the Court finally cancelled its previous permission granted to Govindaprasad to conduct the case as a pauper (vide *Letters and Documents* Nos. 129 and 130 pp. 238—48). The final hearing of the case took place on the 10th December 1819. No person appeared for the complainant presumably anticipating the results. The counsel for the defendant argued the case and judgment was delivered. *The case was dismissed with costs* by the three judges, Sir Edward Hyde East, Chief Justice, Sir Francis Macanaghten and Sir Anony Buller (vide *Letters and Documents* no. 131, pp. 248-72). From the above account it would be clear that Mr. Brajendra-nath Banejee is definitely wrong when he says that Govindaprasad came to a settlement regarding the case ("কিছুদিন পরে গোবিন্দপ্রসাদ মকদ্দমা মিটাইয়া ফেলিলেন," *Rammohun Roy* p. 38). Throughout the proceedings, Govindaprasad never showed any spirit of compromise and he lost the case inspite of his best efforts to win it. He no doubt wrote a letter to Rammohun expressing regret for having unjustly instituted the law-suit relying on the words of others and asking his uncle's forgiveness. (For the text of the letter see Nagendranath Chatterjee *Mahatma Raja Rammohun Royer Jiban-charit* 5th Ed. pp. 301-02).



But his repentance does not seem to have been sincere. For we find him siding with his mother Durga Devi, the widow of Jagamohun in the case filed by her against Rammohun in the Equity division of the Supreme Court on the 13th April 1821 in which she claimed that the *taluks* Ram-svarpur and Govindapur were purchased by her money by Rammohun Roy and consequently these belonged to her. Govindaprasad who made no such claim in his own case did not hesitate to sign his name as an attesting witness to Durga Devi's warrant of attorney of the 29th September, 1820 (*Letters and Documents* pp. liv 301).

The moving spirit behind the young and inexperienced youth Govindaprasad in the case *Govindaprasad vs. Rammohun* appears to have been Rammohun's mother Tarini Devi, Rammohun's crusade against idol-worship must have shocked his mother profoundly. It has been very pertinently observed: "When Rammohun began his crusade against idolatry, he must have stopped payment of his share of the cost of the idolatrous religious ceremonies performed by his mother" at Langulpara, as "one of the rules of his Atmiya Sabha founded in 1815 required it." (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* p. xliii). A reference to the strict rules of the *Ātmiya Sabhā* prohibiting any participation in idol-worship and idolatrous practices on the part of its members, is to be found in a notice of Rammohun Roy and his reforming activities that appeared in the *Missionary Register* London 1816 (J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* Calcutta 1941, pp. 3-6). Rammohun's religious views must have completely alienated his mother from him and provoked his nephew Govindaprasad supported of course by Tarini Devi to excommunicate him and his family. Becharam Sen who served Rammohun as a mohurrir from 1808-09 to 1816, testifying for Govindaprasad in the above case said: "Saith that he was discharged from the said (Rammohun Roy's) service...owing to this deponent having sided with the complainant Govindaprasad Roy in matter regarding their caste in which they differed Saith that four or five days after he was discharged from service of the defendant (Rammohun Roy) he entered the service of the complainment" (*Letters and*

*Documents* p. xliv, also No. 104, p 103 ; italics in the body of the quotation are ours—*Editors*). Further light on Tarini Devi's activities in this respect is thrown by one (the eleventh) of the cross interrogatories intended to be put to his mother by Rammohun as she had been cited as a witness by Govindaprasad Roy (*Letters and Documents* No. 126, p. 234) The passages deserve to be quoted : "Have you not had serious disputes and differences with your son the Defendant Rammohun Roy on account of his religious opinions and have you not instigated and prevailed on your Grandson the Complainant to institute the present suit against the said Defendant, as a measure of revenge, because the said Defendant hath refused to practise the rites and ceremonies of the Hindu Religion in the manner in which you wish the same to be practised or performed ? Have not you and the Complainant and other members of your family estranged yourself and themselves from all intercourse with the Defendant on account of his religious opinions and writings ? Have you not repeatedly declared that you desire the ruin of the Defendant and there will not only be no sin but that it will be meritorious to effect the temporal ruin of the Defendant, provided he shall not resume or follow the religious usages and worship of his Fore Fathers. Have you not publicly declared that it will not be sinful to take away the life of a Hindoo who forsakes the idolatry and ceremonies of worship, usually practised by persons of that Religion ? Has not the Defendant in fact refused to practise the rites and ceremonies of the Hindoo religion in respect to the worship of Idols ? Have not you, and the Complainant and others of the Defendants' relations had several meetings and conversations on this subject and declare solemnly on your Oath, whether you do not know and believe that *the present suit would not have been instituted if the Defendant had not acted in religious matters contrary to your wishes and differently from the practices of his ancestors ? . . .* Did you not since the commencement of this suit make personal application to the Defendant at his house in Simlah in Calcutta for the grant of a piece of Land that the profits thereof might be applied towards the Worship of an Idol : and did not the Defendant offer you a large sum of money to be distributed in Charity to the poor, but refuse to



contribute in any manner to the encouragement of the worship of Idols? Were you not on that occasion exceedingly displeased with the Defendant and did you not then express your displeasure and threaten the Defendant for having refused to comply with your request? . . . .", (italics ours—*Editors*). It is significant that *Tarini Devi did not come forward to answer these questions* in the court inspite of the court having issued subpœna on her as a witness (vide *Letters and Documents* No. 117 pp. 193-94). It therefore appears that the case owed its origin really to the violently hostile reaction of Rammohun's relatives including his mother, to Rammohun's religious views. After it had started, Tarini Devi seems to have made a last attempt at reconciliation by appealing to Rammohun for a plot of land to be utilised for the worship of an idol. The son refused, maintaining his attitude of uncompromising antagonism to idol-worship but offered his mother instead, a large sum of money to be distributed to the poor. This act seems to have further stiffened the attitude of the mother.

However much one may deplore the part played by Tarini Devi in the case, one cannot but feel a sort of admiration for the proud-spirited lady who seems to have valued her orthodox tenets more highly than even the life of her only surviving son. She spent the last two years of her life at Puri dying there on the 21st April 1822. (Banerji *Rammohun Roy* p. 39) In spite of her hostile attitude to him Rammohun as recorded by Dr. Lant Carpenter, manifested a warm and affectionate attachment towards his mother. The touching scene of her final farewell from her son is thus described by Dr. Carpenter "...it was with glistening eyes that he told us she had "repented" of her conduct towards him. Though convinced that his doctrines were true, she could not throw off the shackles of idolatrous customs. "Rammohun" she said to him, before she set out on her last pilgrimage to Juggernath where she died, "you are right, but I am a weak woman, and am grown too old to give up these observances, which are a comfort to me." (Mary Carpenter *Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy* Calcutta 1915, pp. 9-10).

The case *Durga Devi vs. Rammohun Roy* may be briefly

summarised. In her Bill of Complaint filed on the 13th April 1821 in the Supreme Court, Durga Devi, the widow of Jagamohun states that she lent Rammohun Rs. 4500 which enabled the latter to purchase the *taluks* Govindapur and Rameswarpur and Rammohun was merely holding them on lease. She claimed these properties on the ground that the period of lease was over. (*Letters and Documents* No. 132, pp. 278—86). Rammohun's answer was filed on the 5th September 1821 wherein he denied his having borrowed the above sum from Durga Devi or having ever held the mentioned taluks under the above condition or having executed the documents attached to the Bill of Complaint (*Ibid* No. 135, pp. 287-96). Durga Devi failed to produce a single witness to prove her case which was dismissed with costs for want of prosecution on the 30th November 1821 (*Ibid* No. 140, pp. 299-300).

Notice may be conveniently taken here of two other legal proceedings with which Rammohun was directly or indirectly connected. On the 16th June 1823 Maharaja Tejchand of Burdwan had brought three suits against Rammohun Roy and Govindaprasad Roy "based on three *Kistibandi* bonds alleged to have been executed by Rammohun's father, claiming Rs. 12,624, Rs. 56,807 and Rs. 15,200 respectively", in the Provincial Court, Calcutta. Rammohun made an able defence in course of which he declared the claim of the plaintiff "a piece of fraud" and described the underlying motive of the plaintiff in instituting these suits as "nothing but this that my nephew (sister's son) Baboo Gooroodas Mookherjee held the office of Dewan in the service of Maharaja Pratap Chund, the son of the plaintiff, and after the death of the Maharaja acted as vakeel on behalf of the ranees, the wives of the Maharaja against the plaintiff in a case in the court." He also reemphasized the point that during the life-time of his father he had "separated from him and the rest of the family in consequence of his altered habits of life and change of opinions and been living independently on his own earning" (*italics ours—Editors*; see *Letters and Documents* p 306). The cases were dismissed with costs. Maharaja Tejchand preferred an appeal to the *Sadar Dewany Adalat* against the judgment of the Provincial Court, but there also his appeal was dismissed with



costs (vide *Letters and Documents* No. 141, pp. 306-11). The other case was against Radhaprasad Roy, the elder son of Rammohun who was prosecuted for embezzlement of Government funds, while acting as the Naib Sherishtadar of the Burdwan Collectorate. It dragged on during the two years 1825 and 1826, and in the end Radhaprasad was honorably acquitted. From a study of the relevant papers and documents connected with the case, and collected by Messrs. Chanda and Majumdar, it appears that the institution of the law-suit was the result of a deep laid conspiracy against the family of Rammohun Roy, hatched by the party of Maharaja Tejchand of Burdwan, which probably succeeded in influencing some high-placed British officers of the Company like Mr. Molony, the Superintendent and Remembrancer of Legal Affairs (appointed Commissioner to inquire into the case of embezzlement), Mr. Hutchinson, the Magistrate of Burdwan and Mr. Armstrong the Collector of the same district. It is not also difficult to guess the reason of the Raja of Burdwan's hostility. Maharaja Tejchand was at the time engaged in litigation with his daughters-in-law, widows of his deceased son Pratapchand for the possession of the Ganga-Manoharpur taluk. Members of Rammohun Roy's family including his nephew Gurudas Mukherji and son Radhaprasad Roy, are known to have actively assisted the Ranis against their father-in-law and thus incurred the bitter hostility of the latter (vide *Letters and Documents* Nos. 141 and 207, pp. 307, 447). Rammohun had no connection whatsoever with the case in which his son was involved, but the torture and persecution which Radhaprasad had to undergo for a long period resulted in the latter's mother dying broken-hearted and also in a complete breakdown of Rammohun's health. These facts are mentioned by Radhaprasad himself in his petition submitted to the Governor-General Lord William Bentinck on the 23rd July 1828, after his acquittal (*Letters and Documents* No. 249, p. 519). The circumstances leading to the prosecution and acquittal of Radhaprasad Roy have been ably described in Chanda and Majumdar's *Letters and Documents*. Introduction, pp. lxi-lxxxix ; for the relevant documents see *Text* pp. 315-522.

The records of the above law-suits lead invariably to the following conclusions :

(a) It is not a fact that the family estate passed from Govindaprasad to Rammohun after the death of Jagamohun Roy in 1812. Rammohun even transferred his half-share in the family residence at Langulpara to his nephew Gurudas Mukherji in 1814, and himself removed with his family in 1817 to the new house which he had built in the neighbouring village of Raghunathpur. The paternal estate remained in possession of Govindaprasad, son of Jagamohun, over which Rammohun *never advanced any claim*. The landed property enjoyed by Govindaprasad in 1819, amounted, as it was proved in the Court, to about sicca Rupees Twelve Thousand.

(b) It was proved in the Court that the property enjoyed by Rammohun was not joint, but had been acquired by him solely through his individual efforts, during the period when he had separated from the rest of the family due to his fundamentally different religious and social outlook.

(c) The real motive behind the institution of the first two law-suits, by Rammohun's relatives, was to "ruin" Rammohun because of the latter's refusal to believe in or to support in any manner, idolatrous aspects of Hindu worship and also because of his critical attitude towards orthodox caste rules. The guiding spirit behind the case filed by Govindaprasad Roy against Rammohun, appears to have been Tarini Devi, Rammohun's mother.

(d) The three cases against Rammohun and one against his son not only proved 'ruinously expensive' to the former, but the anxiety for and exertions on behalf of his son during the progress of the last mentioned one, completely broke Rammohun's health, "from the effects of which he could not recover even after a year and a half, as certified by his medical attendant Mr. Alexander Halliday" (*Letters and Documents* p. 519) ; further during this period, he also lost his wife who died broken-hearted from the great shock she received due to the persecutions and sufferings her son had to undergo.

Considering all these points, one feels inclined to endorse fully the following statement made by Messrs Chanda and Majumdar, regarding the records of these cases, collected in



their priceless volume : “The records...are really annals of the Raja’s long persecution, and these bring into clear relief the greatness and patriotism of the man, who in the midst of these attacks to bring down ruin and disgrace on him, never lost sight of his self-imposed mission of uplifting his countrymen” (*Letters and Documents* Preface p. ii)

## VI

The “insinuations” did not, it may at once be pointed out, come from Kishorychand Mitra himself, who had been throughout his life, well-known for his great respect and admiration for Rammohun Roy and the latter’s religious and social views. (See Manmathanath Ghosh’s excellent Bengali biography *Karmabir Kishorichand Mitra* Calcutta 1333 B. S., pp. 45, 58, 74-76, 206-10). That Kishorychand did not accept these “insinuations” himself, is quite clear from the language used by him e.g. “If Rammohun did keep his hands clean and abstained *as in the absence of all positive evidence to the contrary we are bound to suppose.....* he must have been a splendid exception” (italics ours—*Editors* ; or again, “The evidence on the subject is too inconclusive to arrive at a decision.” He was therefore not prepared to believe in these wild accusations “in the absence of all positive evidence.”

Mr. Leonard (in his *History of the Brahmo Samaj* p. 21) and Miss Collet have defended Rammohun in a dignified manner and have treated these “unworthy suspicions” with the contempt they deserve. Fortunately their arguments can now be supplemented by some additional facts that have come to light since they wrote.

The original charge, as recorded by Kishorychand Mitra (*Calcutta Review*, December 1845, pp. 364-65), is that during Rammohun’s ten years’ Government Service the latter is said to have realized as much money as enabled him to become a Zaminder with an annual income of Rs. 10,000, and this raises the suspicion that he must have “sold justice” while he was in the Service of the Company. It can now be shown definitely that this suspicion has absolutely no basis.

Rammohun Roy was most certainly not in Government Service for a period of ten years. In 1803 he acted for about three months as *dewan* of Mr. Thomas Woodforde, Collector of Dacca-Jalalpore. (See above p. 15). Afterwards from 1805 to 1809 he was in the service of Mr. Digby and accompanied him to Ramgarh Jessore and Bhagalpur. During these years he was for the most part in the private employment of Mr. Digby, only holding an official post at Ramgarh for a period of three months. At Rangpur the first phase of his Government Service as *dewan* was a period probably of four months (November 1809 to March 1810). (See above p. 38). There is of course reason to believe, as we have seen, that afterwards he was reappointed *dewan* at Rangpur and subsequently served as an envoy of the British Government to Bhutan. The duration of the period of his service under the East India Company however cannot possibly have been *ten years*. Mr. Brajendranath Banerji thinks that Rammohun was in Government Service for a total period of one year and nine months only (*Rammohun Roy* p. 32). We are inclined to think that it would be a little longer so as to include Rammohun's second phase of *dewanship* at Rangpur. But it cannot certainly have been *very much* longer. So the story of Rammohun's "ten years' Government Service" is certainly a myth.

Secondly, it must be borne in mind that *before* he had entered the Service of the East India Company, Rammohun was *already* a *Zamindar* and had also earned enough money by the business of money-lending and by dealing in Company's Paper, in Calcutta. He was engaged in business in Calcutta probably since 1797. Already in 1799 he had purchased the taluks Govindapur and Rameswarpur drawing an annual income of Rs. 5500/- from them. (See above p. 14). He further purchased the four following *patni taluks* in the following years : (1) Langulpara in 1803-04 ; (2) Birluk in 1808-09 ; (3) Krishnanagar in 1809-10 ; and (4) Srirampur in 1809-10, all in the Burdwan district (*Letters and Documents* p. xxxix ; also No. 131, pp 263-64). These four taluks gave Rammohun a further annual income of five or six thousand rupees (*Letters and Documents* No. 103, p. 98). So by 1810 Rammohun was already a land-owner with a total annual income of more than



Rs. 10,000 derived from his previously purchased estates of Govindapur and Rameswarpur and the subsequently acquired *patni taluks*. But up to 1810 Rammohun *had not yet completed even one year of Government Service* (taking together the length of his service periods at Dacca-Jalalpore, Ramgarh and the first phase at Rangpur) ! It will thus be seen that Rammohun's purchase of landed property and becoming "a zamindar with an annual income of Rs. 10,000" can possibly have nothing much to do with his service under the East India Company. He had laid the foundation of his prosperity by business since 1797 and had acquired landed estates before he began to serve the Government. Throughout the period from 1805 to 1815 Rammohun though himself staying out of Calcutta, maintained his business in the capital city through his cash-keeper Gopimohun Chatterjee. Steady income derived from his estates Govindapur and Rameswarpur and business must have enabled him to purchase the four *patni taluks* and the acquisition was complete before Rammohun had served the East India Company even for *one* year in different places. Even if we leave aside for the moment the inherent nobility of his character which shrank always from everything mean and dishonest as the known facts of his life establish beyond doubt, and judge him as an ordinary individual, we are bound to admit that he had no need or opportunity to serve the Government for ten years and receive illegal gratification in service to become a zamindar. It is possible to account satisfactorily for all his landed and house property without taking into consideration his income from private and Government Service.

It may also be pointed out in this connection, that as a zamindar and a businessman, Rammohun's conduct had always been honest straightforward and above board, and no charge of any underhand dealing was ever levelled against him by any contemporary critic. That he had great reputation for honesty and integrity in the world of business and the Stock Exchange, is indirectly proved by the fact that he had been elected a member of the Committee of Management and also the joint-treasurer of the "Commercial and Patriotic Association" formed mainly by the European

business community of Calcutta on the 31st January 1828 (vide *India Gazette* February 4, 1828, quoted in J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 152, pp. 265-68)

In fact many of Rammohun's biographers seem to have misunderstood the real motive behind Rammohun's acceptance of service under Mr. Digby or the East India Company. It was very probably not the acquisition of money because he was already a man of wealth when he decided to leave Calcutta as the private *munshi* of Mr. Digby. It has been rightly guessed that one of his objects "was learning the English language and studying the English character" (*Letters and Documents* p. xl). The company of his admiring employer Mr. Digby, gave him great opportunities in both these respects. During the period of his close association with Mr. Digby he not only vastly improved his knowledge of English but also gained a fair knowledge of the contemporary Continental politics through "the constant habit of reading English newspapers". (See above p. 24). He also formed *the plan of an immediate visit to England* and wrote to Mr. Digby in England, to that effect as early as in 1816 or 1817. (The relevant extract from this letter will be found in *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* edited by Kalidas Nag and Debajyoti Burman, Part IV, Calcutta 1947, pp. 94-95.) The chief motive of the intended visit was his *desire to enter one of the English universities as student* as testified to by Lt. Col. Fitzclarence (Lord Munster) in his account of Rammohun Roy based on a close personal acquaintance with the latter (vide Lt. Col. Fitzclarence *Journal of a Route Across India through Egypt to England in the Latter End of the year 1817 and the Beginning of 1818* John Murray, London, 1819, p. 107). The religious discussions and controversies at Rangpur also indicate that Rammohun's characteristic attitude in religion had already taken a definite shape and we may suppose with Sri Girijasaṅkar Roychoudhury that the discussion-meetings held at Rammohun's house at Rangpur actually laid the foundation of the future Brahmo movement (See his article in the *Tattvakaumudi* Vol. 77. No. 9, p. 66.) Besides there is reason to believe that already since 1812, Rammohun had begun his campaigns



against the barbarous custom of *Sati*; (see Note VIII to chapter III). Further it is quite certain that Rammohun must have utilised the period from 1805 to 1815 (particularly his years at Rangpur) in writing some of his books like the elaborate exposition of the *Vedānta Sūtras* entitled *Vedāntagrantha*, their short summary known as the *Vedāntasāra* etc., which he started publishing immediately after his arrival in Calcutta. The *Vedāntagrantha* was published in 1815. There is therefore ample evidence that money-making was not the chief motive behind Rammohun's acceptance of private or Government service.

## VII

That Rammohun was an eye witness of the burning of widows, seems also to be indicated by the following passage in his *A Second Conference between an Advocate for and an Opponent of the Practice of Burning Widows Alive*: "So far have Pandits been infatuated in attempting to give the appearance of propriety to improper actions, that they have even attempted to make people believe, that a rope may remain unconsumed amidst a flaming fire, and prevent the members of a body from being dispersed from the pile. Men of sense may now judge of the truth of the reason to which you ascribe the practice of tying down widows. *All people in the world are not blind, and those who will go and behold the mode in which you tie down women to the pile, will readily perceive the truth and falsehood of the motives you assign for the practice.* (italics our—Editors); (*The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* edited by Kalidas Nag and Debajyoti Burman, Part III, Calcutta 1947, pp. 122-23). For the corresponding Bengali passage in the original Bengali text, see Rammohun's *Sahamaran Vishaaye Prabartak O Nibartaker Dvitiya Sambad* (Sahitya Parishad Edition of Rammohun's Bengali Works, p. 43). The Bengali book was published from Calcutta in 1819 and the English translation, from the same place in the following year.

## CHAPTER III

( 1814<sup>1</sup>—1820 )

### FIRST REGULAR CAMPAIGN : SPIRITUAL THEISM VERSUS IDOLATRY AND SUTTEE

- 1814<sup>2</sup>. Rammohun settles in Calcutta.
1815. Founds the Atmiya Sabha or Friendly Association. Translates the *Vedānta* into Bengali.
1816. Writes *Abridgment of the Vedānta*, and publishes it in Bengali, Hindusthani, and English. Translates the *Kena* and *Isha Upanishads* into Bengali and English.
1817. Letter to Mr. Digby. Writes *A Defence of Hindu Theism* Parts I and II. Translates *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* into Bengali. Translates *Muṇḍaka* and *Kāṭha Upanishads* into Bengali and English.
1818. Nov. 30. Publishes the English edition of his first tract on Suttee.
1819. 19th Pous. Great meeting of Atmiya Sabha ; discussion with Subrahmanya Śāstri.
1820. Feb. 26. Publishes English version of his second tract on Suttee.

At last, in the year 1814,<sup>3</sup> at the age of forty-two, Rammohun Roy emerged from provincial obscurity, and took up his abode in the capital of British India. He was now in the prime of manhood,

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1. We have seen that Rammohun could not have finally settled in Calcutta before November 1815. See Note II to Chapter II.—*Editors*.

2. Should be 1815—*Editors*.

3. Should be 1815—*Editors*.



a majestic looking man, nearly six feet in height, and remarkable for his dignity of bearing and grace of manner, as well as for his handsome countenance and sparkling eyes. He seems to have owned two houses in Calcutta, but that of which we chiefly hear was his garden house at Maniktala, which he furnished in the English style. Babu Rakhal Das Halder says that Rammohun's Calcutta house was built for him by his half-brother (whom Babu Rakhal calls Ramtanu Roy, though he is usually known as Ramlochan).<sup>4</sup> Here then Rammohun settled himself, and took up his life's work in thorough earnest.

How formidable that work was, can with difficulty be realised at the present day. Thick clouds of ignorance and superstition hung over all the land; the native Bengali public had few books, and no newspapers. Idolatry was universal, and was often of a most revolting character; polygamy

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4. Apparently there is some confusion here. Ramlochan Roy and Ramtanu Roy were two different persons. The first was a step-brother of Rammohun, being the son of Ramkanta Roy by the latter's third wife Rammani Devi; while Ramtanu was the son of Gopimohun Roy, a brother of Ramkanta. Ramlochan had died in December-January 1809-10 (*Chanda and Majumdar Letters and Documents* p. 65). If therefore someone from among Rammohun's relatives helped him in building the Maniktala house which was built possibly sometime later than 1814, it could not have been Ramlochan Roy. Ramtanu Roy is on the other hand, a likely person to have supervised the building of this house. He was a resident of Maniktala in Calcutta (*Letters and Documents* p. 156) and was on friendly terms with his cousin Rammohun. For the Calcutta houses of Rammohun, see Note I at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.

and infanticide were widely prevalent, and the lot of Bengali women was too often a tissue of ceaseless oppressions and miseries, while as the crowning horror, the flames of the suttee were lighted with almost incredible frequency even in the immediate vicinity of Calcutta. The official returns of the years immediately following Rammohun's removal thither, give the number of suttees in the suburbs of Calcutta alone as twenty-five in 1815, forty in 1816, thirty-nine in 1817, and forty-three in 1818,—the ages of these victims ranging from 80, 90, and 100, down to 18, 16, and even 15. All these inhumanities deeply afflicted the heart of Rammohun Roy. An ardent lover of his country, he longed to deliver her from her degradations, and to set her feet on safe paths, and to that end he devoted his whole energies from this time forth. He did not, however, confine his activity to one or two subjects. His alert and eager mind ranged with keen interest over the whole field of contemporary life, and in almost every branch thereof he left the impress of his individuality. Alike in religion, in politics, in literature, and in philanthropy, his labours will be found among the earliest and most effective in the history of native Indian reform.

In chronicling a life of such manifold and simultaneous activities in various fields, the best way to avoid needless repetition will be to keep as closely as possible to the chronological order of events. I shall, therefore, divide the sixteen<sup>5</sup> years of Rammohun's Calcutta life into four periods, which

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5. Should be fifteen years, considering Rammohun's final settlement in Calcutta to have taken place in 1815—*Editors*.



mark the successive stages in his treatment of the main problems of his day. These periods are (1) from 1814<sup>6</sup> to 1820 ; (2) from 1820 to 1824 ; (3) from 1824 to 1828 ; (4) from 1828 to September<sup>7</sup>, 1830. The three years which followed, mostly spent in England,—where he died in September, 1833,—form a separate period altogether, and may be regarded as a general epilogue to the whole.\*

*Attitudes* Commencing with the first of these periods, we soon see that to Rammohun's mind the root evil of the whole wretched state of Hindu society was idolatry, and to destroy this was his first object. His multifarious researches in the various sacred books of India had shown him how comparatively modern was the popular Hinduism then current, and with what gross corruptions it had superseded the earlier forms of Hindu faith and practice. Single-handed as he was, he naturally sought the path of least resistance, and by appealing to the venerated authorities of the more ancient and spiritual scriptures, he endeavoured to purify and elevate the minds of his countrymen. For this purpose he selected some of the chief productions of the Vedāntic system, "which (writes Pandit Sivanath Śāstri) were of unquestionable authority in matters of Hindu theology. With the general decline of learning, these writings had fallen into disuse in the province of Bengal, and there were

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6. Should be 1815.—*Editors.*

7. Rammohun sailed for England in November 1830.  
—*Editors.*

\* To the third period two chapters are devoted (v., vi.) ; to the rest one chapter each—*Continuator,*

very few men even amongst those who were reputed to be learned at that time who were familiar with their contents." In 1815 he published his translation of the Vedānta Sūtra itself from the original Sanskrit into Bengali; and in 1816 he published a brief summary of this in Bengali, Hindusthani and English<sup>8</sup>. It had been his wish to "render a translation of the complete Vedānta into the current languages of his country," but this was never fully carried out<sup>9</sup>. He recounts, however, how "during the interval between my controversial engagements with idolators as well as with advocates of idolatry, I translated several of the ten Upanishads of which the Vedānta or principal part of the Veds consist." Of these the *Kena* and *Isha Upanishads* appeared in 1816, and the *Kaṭha*, *Muṇḍaka* and *Māṇḍukya Upanishads* in 1817,<sup>10</sup> and all of these except the last he translated into English also. These works he published with introductions and comments, and distributed them widely among his countrymen, free of charge.

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8. According to some the Bengali version of this shorter work, entitled *Vedāntasāra* was published in 1815.  
—Editors.

9. His original elaborate work on the *Vedānta-Sūtras* entitled *Vedāntagrantha* was translated into Hindusthani and distributed free of cost, among his countrymen (vide, Rammohun's preface to his *English Translation of An Abridgment of the Vedānta*—Nag and Burman *English Works of Raja Rammohun Rôy* Part III, Calcutta 1946, pp. 59-60).  
—Editors.

10. The *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* was published in 1819. Rammohun published a few more works on the *Vedānta*. See Note II at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.



The following extracts, written in 1816, will show the earnest feelings with which he started his propaganda.

My constant reflections to the inconvenient, or rather injurious rites, introduced by the peculiar practice of Hindu idolatry, which more than any other Pagan worship, destroys the texture of society, together with compassion for my countrymen, have compelled me to use every possible effort to awaken them from their dream of error : and by making them acquainted with their Scriptures, enable them to contemplate with true devotion the unity and omnipresence of Nature's God.

By taking the path which conscience and sincerity direct, I, born a Brahmin, have exposed myself to the complainings and reproaches, even of some of my relations, whose prejudices are strong, and whose temporal advantage depends upon the present system. But these, however accumulated, I can tranquilly bear ; trusting that a day will arrive when my humble endeavours will be viewed with justice,—perhaps acknowledged with gratitude. At any rate, however men may say, I cannot be deprived of this consolation : my motives are acceptable to that Being who beholds in secret and compensates openly !\*

Some Europeans, endued with high principles of liberality, but unacquainted with the ritual part of Hindu idolatry are disposed to palliate it by an interpretation which, though plausible, is by no means well founded. They are willing

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\* Final paragraphs to the Preface of his first English work, whose title was in itself a manifesto of the new crusade which he was initiating :—“*Translation of an Abridgment of the Vedānt, or Resolution of all the Veds* ; the most celebrated and revered work of Brahminical Theology : establishing the Unity of the Supreme Being : and that He Alone is the object of propitiation and worship. Calcutta, 1816”—*English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, I. p. 5. (The reference here is to Jogendra Chandra Ghosh's Edition which was published in two volumes from Calcutta, the first in 1885, and the second in 1887—*Editors*.)





Dwarkanath Tagore

Engraving by G. R. Ward from a painting by F. R. Say

From a print in the Collection of the Academy of Fine Art, Calcutta

Block lent by Bak-Sahitya





to imagine that the idols which the Hindus worship are not viewed by them in the light of Gods or as real personifications of divine attributes, but merely as instruments for raising their minds to the contemplation of those attributes, which are respectively represented by different figures. I have frequently had occasion to remark, that many Hindus also who are conversant with the English language, finding this interpretation a more plausible apology for idolatry than any with which they are furnished by their own guides, do not fail to avail themselves of it, though in repugnance both to their faith and to their practice. The declarations of this description of Hindus naturally tend to confirm the original idea of such Europeans, who from the extreme absurdity of pure unqualified idolatry, deduce an argument against its existence. It appears to them impossible for men, even in the very last degree of intellectual darkness, to be so far misled as to consider a mere image of wood or of stone as a *human being*, much less as divine existence. With a view, therefore, to do away with any misconception of this nature which may have prevailed, I beg leave to submit the following considerations.

Hindus of the present age, with a very few exceptions, have not the least idea that it is to the attributes of the Supreme Being as figuratively represented by shapes corresponding to the nature of those attributes, they offer adoration and worship under the denomination of gods and goddesses. On the contrary, the slightest investigation will clearly satisfy every inquirer that it makes a material part of their system to hold as articles of faith all those particular circumstances which are essential to the belief in the independent existence of the object of their idolatry as deities clothed with divine power.

Locality of habitation and a mode of existence analogous to their own views of earthly things are uniformly ascribed to each particular god. Thus the devotees of Siva, misconceiving the real spirit of the Scriptures, not only place an implicit credence in the separate existence of Siva, but even regard him as an omnipotent being, the greatest of all the divinities, who, as they say, inhabit the northern mountain of Kailas ; and that he is accompanied by two wives and several children,



and surrounded with numerous attendants. In like manner the followers of Vishnu, mistaking the allegorical representations of the Śāstras for relations of real facts, believe him to be chief over all other gods, and that he resides with his wife and attendants on the summit of heaven. Similiar opinions are also held by the worshippers of Kali, in respect to that goddess. And in fact, the same observations are equally applicable to every class of Hindu devotees in regard to their respective gods and goddesses. And so tenacious are those devotees in respect to the honour due to their chosen divinities that when they meet in such holy places as Haridwar, Prayag, Siva-Kanchi, Vishnu-Kanchi in the Dekhan, the adjustment of the point of precedence not only occasions the warmest verbal altercations, but sometimes even blows and violence. Neither do they regard the images of those gods merely in the light of instruments for elevating the mind to the conception of those supposed beings; they are simply in themselves made objects of worship. For whenever a Hindu purchases an idol in the market, constructs one with his own hands, or has one made under his own superintendence, it is his invariable practice to perform certain ceremonies, called Prāṇa-Pratishṭhā, or the endowment of animation, by which he believes that its nature is changed from that of the mere materials of which it is formed, and that it acquires not only life but supernatural powers. Shortly afterwards, if the idol be of the masculine gender, he marries it to a feminine one, with no less pomp and magnificence than he celebrates the nuptials of his own children. The mysterious process is now complete, and the god and goddess are esteemed the arbiters of his destiny, and continually receive his most ardent adoration.

At the same time, the worshipper of images ascribes to them at once the opposite natures of human and super-human beings. In attention to their supposed wants as living beings, he is seen feeding, or pretending to feed them every morning and evening; and as in the hot season he is careful to fan them, so in cold he is equally regardful of their comfort, covering them by day with warm clothing, and placing them at night in a snug bed. But superstition does not find a limit here; the acts and speeches of the idols,

and their assumptions of various shapes and colours, are gravely related by Brahmins, and with all the marks of veneration are firmly believed by their deluded followers.\*

My reflections upon these solemn truths have been most painful for many years. I have never ceased to contemplate with the strongest feelings of regret, the obstinate adherence of my countrymen to their fatal system of idolatry, inducing, for the sake of propitiating their supposed Deities, the violation of every humane and social feeling. And this in various instances ; but more especially in the dreadful acts of self-destruction and the immolation of the nearest relations under the delusion of conforming to sacred religious rites. I, have never ceased, I repeat, to contemplate these practices with feelings of regret, and to view in them the moral debasement of a race who, I cannot help thinking, are capable of better things, whose susceptibility, patience, and mildness of character, render them worthy of a better destiny. Under these impressions, therefore, I have been impelled to lay before them genuine translations of parts of their Scripture, which inculcates not only the enlightened worship of one God, but the purest principles of morality, accompanied with such notices as I deemed requisite to oppose the arguments employed by the Brahmins in defence of their beloved system. Most earnestly do I pray that the whole may, sooner or later, prove efficient in producing on the minds of Hindus in general, a conviction of the rationality of believing in and adoring the Supreme Being only ; together with a complete perception and practice of that grand and comprehensive moral principle—*Do unto others as ye would be done by.*†

Such was the standing ground from which Rammohun Roy opened his first regular campaign.

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\* Preface to the *Translation of the Ishopanishad*, Calcutta, 1816, *English Works*, I, pp. 77-79. (J. C. Ghosh's Edition—*Editors*).

† Concluding paragraph of the *Introduction to the Ishopanishad*. *English Works*, I. pp. 86-87. (J. C. Ghosh's Edition. — *Editors*).



The fame of his provincial discussions and writings had preceded his settlement in Calcutta, and when these were followed up by such increased and systematic opposition to the popular creed, great excitement was produced in Hindu society, and the orthodox feeling against Rammohun soon became very hostile. Meanwhile he gathered around him a small circle of intelligent friends who sympathised more or less actively in his desire to enlighten his countrymen; and in 1815 he started a little society which he entitled the Atmiya Sabha or Friendly Association for the purpose of spiritual improvement. It met once a week and its proceedings consisted in the recitation of texts from the Hindu Scriptures and the chanting of Theistic hymns composed by Rammohun and his friends. Rammohun's Pandit, Sivaprasad Misra, was the first reciter and a paid singer, Govinda Mala was the first chanter. "The meetings were not quite public and were attended chiefly by Rammohun's personal friends. Among these may be mentioned Dwarkanath Tagore, Brajamohun Mazumdar, Haladhar Bose, Nandakisore Bose and Rajnarayan Sen"\* There was a remarkable man who also assisted Rammohun at this time, named Hariharananda Tirthaswāmi. This man, "during his peregrinations as a Hindu mendicant had come to Rangpur, and there met Rammohun, who had received him with great honour in recognition of his learning and

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\* This sentence is taken from the *Indian Mirror* of July 1, 1865, from a brief sketch by Keshab Chandra Sen, entitled "Brahmo Samaj, or Theism in India. (See Note III at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors*.)

liberality of spirit : and Tirthaswāmi, bound to Rammohun by love, followed him like a shadow. He practised the rule of Tantric Bāmāchāra, and was a worshipper of One True God according to the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra. Ramchandra Vidyābagish, the first minister of the Brahmo Samaj was the younger brother of this man.”†

If Hariharananda Tirthaswāmi represented the extreme Eastern side of Rammohun's society, the extreme Western side was represented by David Hare, the active and benevolent rationalist who did so much for native Bengal education. In his life by Pyarichand Mitra we read as follows :—

“Hare found an intimate friend in Rammohun Roy. He had begun to spread Theism, denounce idolatry, was moving heaven and earth for the abolition of the Suttee rite, and advocating the dissemination of English education as the means of enlightening his countrymen, . . . The first move he (Hare) made, was in attending, uninvited, a meeting called by Rammohun Roy and his friends for the purpose of establishing a society calculated to subvert idolatry. Hare submitted that the establishment of an English school would materially help their cause. They all acquiesced in the strength of Hare's position, but did not carry out his suggestion.” Hare, therefore, consulted Chief Justice Sir E. Hyde East, who inclined favourably to his ideas. The subject

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† From a letter signed “A devoted disciple of Rammohun Roy”, in the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* for Bhādra, 1787 Saka (1865, A. D.). (The account of the relations between Rammohun and Hariharananda, as given, is incomplete. See Note IV at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.)



was mooted among leading Hindus, meetings were held at Sir E. H. East's house, and it was resolved that "an establishment be formed for the education of native youth." Rammohun Roy, fearing that his presence at the preliminary meeting might embarrass its deliberations, had generously abstained from attending it, but his name had been mentioned as one of the promoters. Soon afterwards some of the native gentlemen concerned, told Sir Edward Hyde East that they would gladly accord their support to the proposed College if Rammohun Roy were not connected with it, but they would have nothing to do with that apostate. Hare communicated this to Rammohun Roy, who willingly allowed himself to be laid aside lest his active co-operation should mar the accomplishment of the project. This was early in 1816<sup>11</sup>. So soon had Hindu orthodoxy taken alarm and so early had Rammohun been called upon to exercise that self-effacingness with which, many a time in his life, did he withhold his name from benevolent schemes for which he nevertheless worked, in order to smooth their reception by the general public, to whom his name was an offence.

About the end of Rammohun's third<sup>12</sup> year in Calcutta, he wrote (fortunately for us) a brief summary of his proceedings to his old friend Mr. Digby, to whom he also sent his first two English publications, the *Abridgment of the Vedant* and the *Kena Upanishad*. These translations Mr. Digby reprinted in London in 1817, with a preface which

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11. See Note V at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors*.

12. Should be the 'second' year according to our calculation.—*Editors*.

beginning with the description of Rammohun quoted in the last chapter,<sup>13</sup> goes on to give the following extract (“made without alteration”) from “a letter I have lately received from him, intimately connected with the subject before me.”

RAMMOHUN ROY TO JOHN DIGBY, ENGLAND.

“I take this opportunity of giving you a summary account of my proceedings since the period of your departure from India.

The consequence of my long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth has been that I have found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles, and better adapted for the use of rational beings, than any others which have come to my knowledge ; and have also found Hindus in general more superstitious and miserable, both in performance of their religious rites and in their domestic concerns, than the rest of the known nations on the earth ; I therefore, with a view of making them happy and comfortable\* both here and hereafter, not only employed verbal arguments against the absurdities of the idolatry practised by them, but also translated their most

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13. See above, pp. 23-24 —*Editors*.

\* To make men “comfortable” may at first sound rather a low aim for a religious reformer, but the preface to the *Kena Upanishad* explains Rammohun’s meaning, which was simply to break the superstitious fetters that made utterly needless discomfort, an essential feature of orthodox Hindu life. In this preface he expresses his desire “to correct these exceptionable practices which not only deprive Hindus in general of the common comforts of society, but also lead them frequently to self-destruction. ....A Hindu of caste can only eat once between sunrise and sunset—cannot eat dressed victuals in a boat or ship—nor clothed—nor in a tavern,—nor any food that has been touched by a person of a different caste—nor if interrupted while eating, can he resume his meal.—*English Works of R. M. Roy*. Vol. I., p. 39 (J. C. Ghosh’s Edition.—*Editors*.)



revered theological work, namely Vedant, into Bengali and Hindustani, and also several chapters of the Ved, in order to convince them that the unity of God, and absurdity of idolatry, are evidently pointed out by their own Scriptures. I, however, in the beginning of my pursuits, met with the greatest opposition from their self-interested leaders, the Brahmins, and was deserted by my nearest relations ; I consequently felt extremely melancholy ; in that critical situation, the only comfort that I had was the consoling and rational conversation of my European friends, specially those of Scotland and England.

I, now with the greatest pleasure inform you that several of my countrymen have risen superior to their prejudices ; many are inclined to seek for the truth ; and a great number of those who dissented from me have now coincided with me in opinion. This engagement has prevented me from proceeding to Europe as soon as I could wish. But you may depend upon my setting off for England within a short period of time ; and if you do not return to India before October next, you will most probably receive a letter from me, informing you of the exact time of my departure for England, and of the name of the vessel on which I shall embark.”<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Digby returned to India in November, 1819, and was again employed in the Bengal Civil Service. During 1821 and 1822 he was stationed at Burdwan, where he would doubtless have many opportunities of meeting his old friend.<sup>15</sup> Rammohun's much longed for visit to England did not

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14. This extract from Rammohun's letter appears in the preface to the London editions of his *Abridgment of the Vedant* and the *Kena Upanishad* published together by Mr. Digby in 1817. The letter must therefore have been written in 1816 or early in 1817. See above p. 57—*Editors*.

15. For Mr. Digby's career at Burdwan, see Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* pp. lxi-lxxv. He fell ill, was granted leave for a year in October 1824 and subsequently died at the Cape of Good Hope.—*Editors*.



III David Hare

From Colesworthy Grant's *Lithographic Sketches of the Public Characters of Calcutta*

Kindly lent by the Asiatic Society, Calcutta





take place until the end of 1830. It is interesting to know how early he had formed that desire.

The year 1817 saw further progress of the movement. Rammohun's publications now began to call forth learned and animated replies from the defenders of Hinduism. The *Madras Courier*, in December, 1816, contained a long letter from the head English master in the Madras Government College, Śaṅkara Śāstri, controverting Rammohun's views as shown in his writings, and pleading for the worship of Divine attributes as virtual deities. Rammohun reprinted this letter with a masterly reply entitled *A Defence of Hindu Theism*, in which he not only defended his own position very clearly, but carried the war into the enemy's camp by exposing the degrading character of the legends attached to so many of the Hindu incarnations, and pointing out how mischievous must be the effect of regarding such narratives as sacred records. Another defender of Hinduism appeared some months later in the Head Pandit of the Government College at Calcutta<sup>16</sup>, Mrityunjaya Vidyālaṅkara, who published a tract entitled *Vedāntachandrikā*.<sup>17</sup> To

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16. College of Fort William, Calcutta, established on the 4th May 1800. Mrityunjaya Vidyālaṅkāra was in the teaching staff of the College for a period fifteen years (from 1801 to 1816). He resigned in July 1816 to accept the post of Pandit, Supreme Court, in which capacity he served till his death in 1819. His Bengali and English tracts criticising Rammohun's views were published in 1817 when he was attached to the Supreme Court—*Editors*.

17. Mrityunjaya Vidyālaṅkāra's *Vedāntachandrikā* has been printed in the *Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Parishad* Edition of Rammohun's Bengali works as well as in the *Mrityunjaya-*



this Rammohun replied in *A Second Defence of the Monotheistical System of the Veds*. In this tract, substantially the same arguments as before were put forth, but with still greater fulness and force. These writings were, however, largely supplemented and strengthened by Rammohun's numerous oral discussions and conversations with his friends, disciples and opponents,—of which we can only now get occasional glimpses. Pandit S. N. Śāstri states in his *History of the Brahmo Samaj* :

“At times the Atmiya Sabha got up interesting discussion meetings which would attract all classes of people. The most remarkable of these meetings was the one held in December, 1816 [17th of Pous], where Rammohun Roy had a face to face fight with his idolatrous adversaries. A learned Madrasi Pandit, called Subrahmanya Śāstri, renowned at that time for his erudition, publicly challenged him to a polemical combat. Rammohun Roy accepted it with pleasure, and in the presence of a large gathering of people, headed by Radhakanta Dev, the acknowledged leader of the orthodox Hindu community, silenced his adversary by the great cogency of his reasoning, as well as by the

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*Granthāvalī* (Calcutta 1346 B.S.) pp. 193-213. It was translated into English under the title *An Apology for the Present System of Hindu Worship*. The translation was published along with the Bengali original also in 1817. Rammohun published his *Bhattacharyer Sahit Vihcār* in reply to Mrityunjaya's Bengali work. *A Second Defence of the Monotheistical System of the Veds* was meant as reply to Mrityunjaya's English work, for the text of which see *Mrityunjaya-Granthāvalī* (Ranjan Publishing House, Calcutta 1346 B. S.) —Editors.

long array of scriptural authorities that he quoted in favour of his views.”<sup>18</sup>

[Defeated in theological debate, his opponents renewed their attack upon him in the law courts. “Shortly after” this debate Rammohun’s nephew (his brother’s son) “brought an action against him in the Supreme Court in order to disinherit him from any participation in the ancestral property, on the score of his being an apostate from the Hindu religion.”\* The endeavour was made to prove that he had broken caste and so forfeited his civil rights. The proceedings lasted some two years, and involved him in great expense, but ended in a complete victory for Rammohun. But during these two years he considered it advisable to discontinue holding the meetings of the Atmiya Sabha, which earlier litigation had compelled him to have convened in the houses of friends instead of his own as previously.] †

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18. Śivanath Śāstri *History of the Brahmo Samaj* Vol. I (Calcutta 1911) pp. 27-28. See Note VI at the end of the Chapter—*Editors*.

\* So Nagendranath Chattopadhyaya in his *Bengali Biography of the Raja*, (5th Ed. pp. 300, 301) : and G. S. Leonard in his *History of the Brahmo Samaj*” (Newman & Co., Calcutta, 1879) p. 35. (See above pp. 43-51.—*Editors*.)

† *Ibid.* Rev. K. S. Macdonald in his lecture on the Raja (entitled *Rajah Rammohun Roy the Bengali Religious Reformer*, Herald Office, Calcutta, 1879) thinks that this giving up these meetings “does not look well,” . . . “seemingly because he was afraid their very existence would prejudice his worldly interests”. Mr. Macdonald apparently forgets that during the latter part of these two years Rammohun was in regular attendance on Mr. W. Adam’s Unitarian services and was



An interesting sign of the progress of Rammohun's views is recorded at the beginning of 1820. A native called as a witness in a court of law refused to take the oath by the waters of the Gangā. He declared himself a follower of Rammohun Roy, and consequently not a believer in the imagined sanctity of the river. He was allowed to affirm as Quakers do. Our Reformer may thus be regarded as a pioneer in the abolition of oaths in courts of law.<sup>19</sup>

We must now take up the other main branch of Rammohun's propaganda, agitation against Suttee. His first tract on this subject appeared in November 1818, in the form of a dialogue between an opponent and an advocate of the custom ; and in February, 1820, this was followed by a second tract giving a later dialogue between the same interlocutors. But before speaking of these in detail,

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openly identified with the Unitarian Committee.—For the sentences enclosed in brackets and notes, the continuator is responsible. (This paragraph, inserted by the continuator, may give the readers the impresson that Rammohun put a temporary stop to his progressive reform work during this time. That supposition would be entirely wrong. See Note VII at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.)

19. A full report of the incident was published in the *Asiatic Journal*, July 1823. (J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 13, p. 22). This "follower of Rammohun Roy" was allowed to swear by the *Vedas* at his own request. It should be noted in this connection that as defendant in the case brought against him by Durga Devi, Rammohun *himself* swore in court by the *Vedānta* on the 3rd September 1821 (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents*. p. 296)—Editors.

some brief account must be given of the state at which the controversy had arrived at that time.

A *Sati*,—long since Anglicised as Suttee—means literally a faithful woman, from *Sat*—truth; but the term has long been practically narrowed to designate a widow who is burnt on the funeral pile of her husband. This “rite” (as it is euphemistically called) was never universal in India, but it has been practised more or less extensively in various localities and amongst various classes in that country. M. Barth, in his admirable work on *The Religions of India*, says (p. 59):—

“A custom which.....could beyond a doubt reckon its victims by myriads, the immolation, viz., more or less voluntary, of the widow on the funeral pile of her husband, is not sanctioned by the Vedic ritual, although certain hints in the symbolism connected with funerals (particularly in the Atharva-Veda) come very near it, and in a measure foreshadow it. In the Atharva-Veda we see the widow could marry again under certain conditions, which in the course of time orthodox usage strictly debarred her from doing. The custom of the suicide of the *Sati* is nevertheless very ancient since as early as the days of Alexander, the Greeks found it was observed among one of the tribes at least of the Panjab. The first Brahmanical testimony we find to it is that of the *Brihaddevatā*, which is perhaps of quite as remote antiquity; in the epic poetry there are numerous instances of it. At first it seems to have been peculiar to the military aristocracy, and it is under the influence of the sectarian religions that it has especially flourished. Justice requires us to add



that it was only at a period comparatively modern that it ceased to meet with opposition,”

Sir John Malcolm in one of his Reports on Central India, says that “the Mahometan rulers endeavoured, as much as they could without offending their Hindu subjects, to prevent it.” The zeal of the Emperor Akbar in the matter is well known, and the *Asiatic Journal* of January, 1824, states that the practice “was discouraged and even forbidden by the Moghul Government,<sup>20</sup> and the Peshwa was in the habit of personally exerting himself to dissuade widows from becoming Suttees, making suitable provision for those who yielded to his arguments.”

When the European powers came to obtain footing in India, they also usually seemed to have endeavoured to stop the Suttee rite. The French, the Dutch, and the Portuguese Colonies all exerted themselves in this direction and with fair success. The English were no less humanely shocked by the practice, and frequently made efforts to stop it but the official class were considerably hampered by the dread of offending native prejudices and thus imperilling the British power in India. At last, however, serious efforts were made by philanthropists in England, both in the House of Commons and in the East India House, and in 1821 the first Blue Book on the subject was issued.

From this valuable storehouse of evidence we find that the first recorded British action in this

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20. The practice was discouraged by some Mughal rulers but was never absolutely forbidden because the Mohammedan rulers were afraid that such a drastic measure might alienate the masses of their Hindu subjects.—*Editors.*

matter took place in the very year of Rammohun's birth, 1772 ; when a Captain Tomin, of Tripetty in Southern India hearing that a widow was about to be sacrificed, went straightway to the spot, and led her away to a place of safety. This truly British course drew down upon him a formidable riot from a large and indignant crowd. But the first deliberate official step taken on this subject was the refusal, in January 1789, of a British magistrate to permit the performance of a Suttee at Shahabad. His letter to the Governor-General in Council, Lord Cornwallis, is so terse and sensible, that it is worth preserving :—

My Lord.— Cases sometimes occur in which a Collector having no specific orders for the guidance of his conduct, is necessitated to act from his own sense of what is right. This assertion has this day been verified in an application from the relatives and friends of a Hindu woman, for my sanction to the horrid ceremony of burning with her deceased husband. Being impressed with a belief that this savage custom has been prohibited in and about Calcutta, and considering the same reasons for its discontinuance would probably be held valid throughout the whole extent of the Company's authority, I positively refused my consent. The rites and superstitions of the Hindu religion should be allowed with the most unqualified tolerance, but a practice at which human nature shudders I cannot permit within the limits of my jurisdiction, without particular instructions. I beg, therefore my Lord, to be informed whether my conduct in this instance meets your approbation.—I am, &c., M. H. Brooke, Collector. Shahabad, 28th Jan., 1789.

Lord Cornwallis's reply informed Mr. Brooke that the Government approved of his refusal to grant the application for permission of the Suttee : but they did “not deem it advisable to authorize him to prevent the observance of it by coercive



measures, or by any exertion of his official powers ; as the public prohibition of a ceremony, authorized by the tenets of the religion of the Hindus, and from the observance of which they have never been restricted by the ruling power, would in all probability tend rather to increase than diminish their veneration for it, and consequently prove the means of rendering it more prevalent than it is at present."

Sixteen years later, in January 1805, Mr. J. R. Elphinstone, a magistrate of Zillah Behar, acted in a similar way, forbidding the sacrifice of a young widow of only twelve years old (who was "extremely grateful for my interposition"), but as he was "not aware of the existence of any order or regulation to prevent such a barbarous proceeding," and as native prejudices might cause trouble, he wrote to headquarters, requesting definite instructions on the subject. Hereupon Lord Wellesley sent a letter (Feb. 5th, 1805) to the Nizamat Adalat, the chief judicial authority in India at that time, requesting that court to ascertain the precise amount of sanction given by the Hindu Śāstras to the practice of Suttee. The Nizamat sent in its reply in four months (June 5th, 1805), enclosing the opinion of a Pandit suggesting certain rules for the guidance of Government officials which might slightly restrict the range of the practice. But no such rules were drawn up and nothing whatever was done for seven years,—a discreditable hiatus, but one which was probably owing, at least in part, to the frequent changes in the personnel of the Government during that period. In 1812, a magistrate of Bundelkhand being perplexed as to his duty

concerning Suttees, wrote (Aug. 3rd) to the Nizam Adalat for instructions: the Nizam sent his letter to the Governor-General (Lord Moira, afterwards Marquis of Hastings) and after eight months more delay the instructions were at last drawn up and issued, April 17th, 1813. Their principle was "to allow the practice in those cases in which it is countenanced by the Hindu religion and law, and to prevent it in others in which it is by the same authority prohibited"—i. e. where the woman is unwilling or is under sixteen, or is pregnant, or drugged, or intoxicated. These instructions were afterwards extended (in January 1815) by the important item of prohibiting Suttee when the widow had very young children,—an extension which was brought in by the humane refusal of some magistrates to sanction such sacrifices, and in June 1817 a full and elaborate summary of the whole series of instructions was drawn up by the Government officials.<sup>21</sup> It is quite clear from the various letters and despatches given in the Blue Book that from this time forth the British authorities did really care earnestly about the matter. Regular statistics on the subject were started in 1815, with which date commenced a series of lists of the Suttee performed all over British India, with the details of name, age,

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21. The relevant correspondence between the Nizam Adalat and the Government on the subject of Sati, including the Nizam's letter, dated June 5, 1805, can now be read in J. K. Majumdar's *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* Nos. 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54 and 55, pp. 97-112,—Editors.



caste, &c., of each victim—truly awful records for any Christian Government.

The first four years of these records—1815-1818—form a sort of initial era which is notable for several reasons. The following tables give a sufficient summary of the main facts :

Division of Calcutta.					Division of Dacca.					Division of Murshidabad.				
Zillahs and Cities.	1815	1816	1817	1818	Zillahs and Cities.	1815	1816	1817	1818	Zillahs and Cities.	1815	1816	1817	1818
Burdwan	...	50	67	98	132	Backergunge	...	1	5	9	1	3	9	4
Cuttack and Balasore	...	9	9	14	11	Chittagong	...	3	5	6	3	...	2	...
Hughly	...	72	51	112	141	Dacca City	...	25	6	18	25	...	1	...
Jessore	...	7	13	21	23	Dacca Jelalpur	...	5	1	5	5	4	6	...
Jungle Mahals	...	34	39	43	61	Mymensingh	...	1	...	1	1	...	1	1
Midnapur	...	4	11	7	22	Sylhet	...	1	...	...	1	...	7	6
Nuddea	...	50	56	88	80	Tipperah	...	22	7	13	22	...	4	1
Suburbs of Calcutta	...	25	40	39	43							...	1	2
24 Pergunnahs	...	2	3	20	31							...	11	15
	253	289	442	544			31	24	52		11	21	42	30

Division of Patna.					Division of Benares.					Division of Bareilly.				
Zillahs and Cities.	1815	1816	1817	1818	Zillahs and Cities.	1815	1816	1817	1818	Zillahs and Cities.	1815	1816	1817	1818
Behar	...	...	...	2	Allahabad	...	3	2	5	Agra	...	1	2	1
Patna City	...	2	5	3	Do. Joint at Futtahpur	...	...	1	1	Alighur	...	...	2	2
Ramgarh	...	2	2	4	Bundelkhand	...	7	6	11	Bareilly Zillah	2	1	1	...
Sarun	...	12	25	23	Do. Joint at Calpee	...	...	9	4	Cawnpur	5	4	3	5
Shahabad	...	4	14	25	Benares City	...	13	12	15	Etawah	4	...	3	3
Tirhut	...	...	3	...	Goruckpur	...	14	23	50	Furruckabad	1	...	1	...
					Do. Joint at Azimghur	...	...	9	2	Moradabad	3	...	...	1
					Jaunpur	...	1	3	3	Shaharunpur, S.	...	...	1	...
					Ghazipur	...	8	15	43	Do., N.	...	7	6	1
					Mirzapur	...	2	4	5		...	...	...	...
	20	29	49	57			48	65	103		15	13	19	13



**General Summary of Suttees From 1815 To 1818**

	1815	1816	1817	1818	Total.
Division of Calcutta ...	253	289	442	544	1528
„ Dacca ...	31	24	52	58	165
„ Murshidabad ...	11	21	42	30	104
„ Patna ...	20	29	49	57	155
„ Benares ...	48	65	103	137	353
„ Bareilly ...	15	13	19	13	60
	378	441	707	839	2365

Three points in these lists will at once strike the reader's eye : (1) the great variation in the number of Suttees in different localities ; (2) the appalling number of those in the Calcutta division, which are nearly double all the rest put together ; and (3) the evident increase in the numbers from year to year, not always in detail for each place, but unmistakably in the totals—the year 1818 giving nearly double the numbers for 1815 in the Dacca division, and more than double in all the others except Bareilly. This alarming increase in the number of Suttees, following so soon on the Government attempts to regulate and check the practice, had greatly discouraged the British authorities even in 1817, and Lord Hastings had consequently stopped the intended publication of the very elaborate set of regulations above referred to, drawn up by the Nizamat Adalat in September, 1817,—saying that more information was needed before going so far. Soon afterwards the Acting Superintendent of Police of the Lower Provinces, Mr. W. Ewer, issued a circular of queries to the magistrates in his jurisdiction, requesting information on six special points.

Their replies are very valuable, and throw much light on the causes of the variations in the statistics.

One of these replies is so important as to deserve special notice. Mr. H. Oakely, a magistrate of Zilla Hughli, writes (Dec. 19, 1818) saying how earnestly he has sought to discover the reason of the great frequency of Suttees in his district,—which yielded the largest number of victims in the list,—376 in the four years ending with 1818. One cause he finds in the nearness to Calcutta.—“It is notorious (he says) that the natives of Calcutta and its vicinity exceed all others in profligacy and immorality of conduct ;” and while the depraved worship of Kāli, “the idol of the drunkard and the thief,” is “scarcely to be met with in the distant provinces,” it abounds in the metropolis.<sup>22</sup> Elsewhere, none but the most abandoned will openly confess that he is a follower of Kāli. In Calcutta we find few that are not....By such men, a Suttee is not regarded as a religious act, but as a choice entertainment ; and we may fairly conclude that the vicious propensities of the Hindus in the vicinity of Calcutta are a cause of the comparative prevalence of the custom.” This view seems to be confirmed by the large number of Suttees in the other districts near Calcutta,—Burdwan (Rammohun’s own district) ranking only second to Hughli. But besides this local cause, Mr. Oakely attributes much to another cause of general application, viz. :

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22. It is not possible to trace any positive connection between the worship of Kāli and the practice of Satī. It is also not accurate or fair to represent Kāli worship as the religion only of “the drunkard and the thief.”—*Editors.*



to the attempts of Government to “regulate” the practice. He says :—

Previous to 1813, no interference on the part of the police was authorised, and widows were sacrificed, legally or illegally as it might happen ; but the Hindus were then aware that the Government regarded the custom with natural horror, and would do anything short of direct prohibition to discourage and gradually to abolish it. The case is now altered. The police officers are ordered to interfere, for the purpose of ascertaining that the ceremony is performed in conformity with the rules of the Śāstras ; and in that event, to allow its completion. This is granting the authority of Government for burning widows ; and it can scarcely be a matter of astonishment that the number of sacrifices should be doubled, when the sanction of the ruling power is added to the recommendation of the Śāstras.

He ends by saying, “I do not hesitate in offering my opinion that a law for its abolition would only be objected to by the heirs, who derive wordly profit from the custom, Brahmins, who partly exist by it, and by those whose depraved nature leads them to look on so horrid a sacrifice as a highly agreeable and entertaining show ; at any rate the sanction of Government should be withdrawn without delay.”

Mr. Ewer, summarizing the replies to his circular of inquiry, expressed his agreement with the views of Mr. Oakely and of other magistrates who wrote to the same effect ; and finally, the Governor-General reluctantly acquiesced in the inference that the Government action in the matter had really tended to increase instead of to discourage the sacrifices,—and therefore suspended any additional regulations for the time.

Meanwhile two native petitions were sent up to the Governor-General which appeared to tell on

the opposite side. They are not mentioned in the Blue Book, and I have only seen the second of them. It is given in full in the *Asiatic Journal* of July 1819, which states that it seems to have been sent up in August, 1818, and that it "was signed by a great number of the most respectable inhabitants of Calcutta."<sup>23</sup> Its immediate occasion was to counteract a petition recently sent up to Government by certain other inhabitants of Calcutta, which had prayed for the repeal of the orders then in force against illegal proceeding in cases of Suttee. The counter-petition challenges the title of the previous supplicants to represent "the principal inhabitants of Calcutta," and warmly endorses the humanity and justice of the afore-mentioned Government order. In forcible language, some of the chief horrors of the Suttee practice are enumerated. For instance :—

"Your petitioners are fully aware from their own knowledge or from the authority of credible eye-witnesses that cases have frequently occurred when women have been induced by the persuasions of their next heirs, interested in their destruction, to burn themselves on the funeral pile of their husbands ; that others who have been induced by fear to retract a resolution rashly expressed in the first moments of grief, of burning with their deceased husbands, have been forced upon the pile and there bound down with ropes, and pressed with green bamboos until consumed with the flames ; that some, after flying from the flame, have been carried back by their relations and burnt to death. All these instances, your petitioners humbly submit are murders according to every Śāstra, as well as to the common sense of all nations."

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23. The text of the petition has been printed in J. K. Majumdar's *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 59, pp. 115-17.—*Editors.*



In conclusion, these petitioners declare that they "look with the most lively hope to such further measures relative to the custom of burning widows as may justly be expected from the known wisdom, decision, and humanity which have ever distinguished your Lordship's administration."

It is evident that the writer of the above took hold of the regulation system from the side of prohibition, regarding the police interference at "illegal" Suttees as a step towards the final abolition of the practice altogether, and looking to Lord Hastings in the hope of further protection. And no doubt a small number of Suttees was really prevented by the regulation system, as we find by occasional records of such instances in the Blue Books. But the balance on the whole was so enormously on the other side that it is not surprising to find, among the letters of the magistrates and other high class officials consulted, a very large proportion of opinions expressed against the system altogether; and the conviction is often put forth that the practice of Suttee might be abolished by law without any danger to the British rule. Lord Hastings left India on Jan. 1, 1823, but his successor Lord Amherst, wrote with equal humanity on the subject, and concurred in the same policy of standing still until he knew in which direction to move. Perhaps, as a new comer, he may have been additionally cautious in the matter. At any rate, the *impasse* remained for some years more.

And now we come to Rammohun Roy. It was in this eventful year 1818, that his influence

in this matter began to be definitely felt.<sup>24</sup> He used to go down to the Calcutta burning-grounds and try to avert the Suttee sacrifices by earnest persuasion. Two of such cases have been recorded, one very briefly ;—the other is described in the *Asiatic Journal* for March 1818, which states that the priests were induced to light the pile first, Rammohun having maintained that the Śāstra required this, and left it open to the widow to ascend the pile and enter the flames *afterwards* if she chose,—his expectation of course being that she would not so choose. But this case (if it be accurately reported ) proved exceptional ; the two widows both fulfilled the Suttee's ideal, and “deliberately walked into” the flames, the younger widow having previously “with great animation, addressed herself to the bystanders in words to this effect :—‘You have just seen my husband's first wife perform the duty incumbent on her, and will now see me follow her example. Henceforward, I pray, do not attempt to prevent Hindu women from burning, otherwise our curse will be upon you.’”<sup>25</sup>

No record is given of the actual ordeal, which often proved fatal to the fortitude of many Suttees who had dared it, as we have seen with Rammohun's own sister-in-law. But assuming the unbroken courage of the two widows here described, it needs not to be added that such heroism was quite

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24. This is not correct. There is reason to believe that Rammohun's campaign against this social evil began much earlier. See Note VIII at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*

25. See *Asiatic Journal* for March 1818, pp. 290-91.

—*Editors.*



exceptional, as may be seen from the details given in the Calcutta petition, quoted above, as well as from the habit prevalent in Bengal of tying down the victims to prevent their escape.

It was in August, 1818, that this petition was presented to Lord Hastings. How far Rammohun was concerned in it, does not appear. It bears traces of his hand, and most likely he wrote a good deal of it,—though there is one paragraph reflecting very harshly on the Mahometans which is so unlike him that it must have come from another source. On the 30th of November following, Rammohun issued an English translation of his first work on the subject ; a *Conference between an Advocate for, and an Opponent of, the Practice of Burning Widows Alive*. The brief preface states that the tract is a literal translation of one in Bengali which “has been for several weeks past in extensive circulation in those parts of the country where the practice of widows burning themselves on the pile of their husbands is most prevalent.”

A *Second Conference* followed, fourteen months later (Feb. 20, 1820) and was dedicated to Lady Hastings in the following words. “The following tract being a translation of a Bengali essay, published some time ago, as an appeal to reason in behalf of humanity, I take the liberty to dedicate to your Ladyship ; for to whose protection can any attempt to promote a benevolent purpose be with so much propriety committed ?”

As Rammohun was far too discreet to have published such a dedication without leave from its object, we may conclude that it virtually

implied the Governor-General's good-will to his movement.

These tracts are very characteristic of their author. He threw his argument into a dramatic form, making the "Opponent" ( of Suttee ) quite as good a Hindu as the "Advocate," and ready to admit that "all those passages you have quoted are indeed sacred law, and it is clear from those authorities that if women perform Concremation or Postcremation, they will enjoy heaven for a considerable time" (previously estimated at thirty-five millions of years). But he calmly points out that all this brings Suttee under the category of acts "performed for the sake of gratifications in this world or the next"; which are declared by the highest Hindu authorities to be only of an inferior order of merit. The Kātha Upanishad declares that "Faith in God which leads to absorption, is one thing; and rites which have future fruition for their object, another. Each of these, producing different consequences, holds out to man inducements to follow it. The man who of these two, chooses faith, is blessed; and he, who for the sake of reward, practices rites, is dashed away from the enjoyment of eternal beatitude." And the author of the *Mitāksharā* decides that "The widow who is not desirous of final beatitude, but who wishes only for a limited term of a small degree of future fruition, is authorized to accompany her husband."

Thus far the abstract argument, of a purely Hindu nature. The "Opponent" then shows that Manu, their great law-giver, expressly enjoined that the widow should live on as an ascetic, and should "continue till death forgiving all injuries" (a signi-



ficant hint !), “performing harsh duties, avoiding every sensual pleasure, and cheerfully practising the incomparable rules of virtue which have been followed by such women as were devoted to one only husband.” Other high authorities are quoted in confirmation of this view.

By this process of argument the “Opponent” brings the discussion up to the critical point. The “Advocate” flatly denies that women are capable of true faith or permanent virtue and avows that they are burnt in order to prevent them from going astray after the husband’s death. Arrived at this issue, Rammohun drops the dramatic dress and enters upon a thorough defence of women in general and Indian women in particular, which shows how closely he had observed, and how deeply he had felt, the wrongs of his country-women, and how ardently he longed to see them delivered from the miseries of their lot. This defence is so characteristic of himself and of the situation that I give it entire,—but must first call attention to one golden sentence concerning the relative trustworthiness of the two sexes which is, alas ! not applicable to India alone.

Women are in general inferior to men in bodily strength and energy ; consequently the male part of the community, taking advantage of their corporeal weakness, have denied to them those excellent merits that they are entitled to by nature, and afterwards they are apt to say that women are naturally incapable of acquiring those merits. But if we give the subject consideration, we may easily ascertain whether or not your accusation against them is consistent with justice. As to their inferiority in point of understanding, when did you ever afford them a fair opportunity of exhibiting, their natural capacity ?

How then can you accuse them of want of understanding ? If, after instruction in knowledge and wisdom, a person cannot comprehend or retain what has been taught him, we may consider him as deficient ; but as you keep women generally void of education and acquirements, you cannot, therefore, in justice pronounce on their inferiority. On the contrary, Lilavati, Bhanumati, the wife of the prince of Karnāt, and that of Kālīdasa, are celebrated for their thorough knowledge of all the Śāstras ; moreover in the Brihadāranyaka-Upanishad of the Yajur-Veda it is clearly stated, that Yājñavalkya imparted divine knowledge of the most difficult nature to his wife Maitreyī, who was able to follow and completely attain it !

Secondly. You charge them with want of resolution, at which I feel exceedingly surprised : for we constantly perceive, in a country where the name of death makes the male shudder, that the female, from her firmness of mind, offers to burn with the corpse of her deceased husband ; and yet you accuse those women of deficiency of resolution.

Thirdly. With regard to their trustworthiness, let us look minutely into the conduct of both sexes, and we may be enabled to ascertain which of them is the most frequently guilty of betraying friends. If we enumerate such women in each village or town as have been deceived by men, and such men as have been betrayed by women, I presume that the numbers of the deceived women would be found ten times greater than that of the betrayed men. Men are, in general, able to read and write, and manage public affairs, by which means they easily promulgate such faults as women occasionally commit, but never consider as criminal the misconduct of men towards women. One fault they have, it must be acknowledged, which is, by considering others equally void of duplicity as themselves, to give their confidence too readily, from which they suffer much misery, even so far that some of them are misled to suffer themselves to be burnt to death.

In the fourth place, with respect to their subjection to the passions, this may be judged of by the custom of marriage as to the respective sexes ; for one man may marry two or three, sometimes even ten wives and upwards ; while a woman, who



marries but one husband, desires at his death to follow him forsaking all worldly enjoyments, or to remain leading the austere life of an ascetic.

Fifthly. The accusation of their want of virtuous knowledge is an injustice. Observe what pain, what slighting, what contempt, and what afflictions their virtue enables them to support ! How many Kulin Brahmins are there who marry ten or fifteen wives for the sake of money, that never see the greater number of them after the day of marriage, and visit others only three or four times in the course of their life. Still amongst those women, most, even without seeing or receiving any support from their husbands, living dependent on their fathers or brothers, and suffering much distress continue to preserve their virtue ; and when Brahmins, or those of other tribes, bring their wives to live with them, what misery do the women not suffer ? At marriage the wife is recognised as half of her husband, but in after conduct they are treated worse than inferior animals. For the woman is employed to do the work of a slave in the house, such as, in her turn, to clean the place very early in the morning, whether cold or wet, to scour the dishes, to wash the floor, to cook night and day, to prepare and serve food for her husband, father and mother-in-law, brothers-in-law, and friends and connections ! (for amongst Hindus more than in other tribes relations long reside together, and on this account quarrels are more common amongst brothers respecting their worldly affairs). If in the preparation or serving up of the victuals they commit the smallest fault, what insult do they not receive from their husband, their mother-in-law, and the younger brothers of their husband ! After all the male part of the family have satisfied themselves, the women content themselves with what may be left, whether sufficient in quantity or not. Where Brahmans or Kāyasthas are not wealthy, the women are obliged to attend to their cows, and to prepare cow dung for firing. In the afternoon they fetch water from the river or tank ; and at night perform the office of menial servants in making the beds. In case of any fault or omission in the performance of those labours, they receive injurious treatment. Should the husband acquire

wealth, he indulges in criminal amours to her perfect knowledge, and almost under her eyes, and does not see her, perhaps once a month. As long as the husband is poor she suffers every kind of trouble, and when he becomes rich she is altogether heart-broken. All this pain and affliction their virtue alone enables them to support. Where a husband takes two or three wives to live with him, they are subjected to mental miseries and constant quarrels. Even this distressed situation they virtuously endure. Sometimes it happens that the husband, from a preference for one of his wives, behaves cruelly to another. Amongst the lower classes, and those even of the better class who have not associated with good company, the wife, on the slightest fault, or even on bare suspicion of her misconduct, is chastised as a thief. Respect to virtue and their reputation generally makes them forgive even this treatment. If, unable to bear such cruel usage, a wife leaves her husband's house to live separately from him, then the influence of the husband with the magisterial authority is generally sufficient to place her again in his hands ; when, in revenge for her quitting him, he seizes every pretext to torment her in various ways, and sometimes even puts her privately to death. These are facts occurring every day, and not to be denied. What I lament is, that seeing the women thus dependent and exposed to every misery, you feel for them no compassion that might exempt them from being tied down and burnt to death.

This noble defence may fitly close our record of Rammohun's first regular campaign. At this point we must leave his controversies on Suttee and Idolatry, to take up other phases of his many-sided activity.



## SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

### I

At different times Rammohun Roy possessed *four* houses in Calcutta. On the occasion of the partition of his paternal estates, he inherited from his father a house at Jorasanko ; (see above p. 11 ; also Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* p. 73). As the records of the law-suit *Govindaprasad Roy vs. Rammohun Roy* indicate, he purchased two more houses in the city in 1814, one at Chowranghee from one Elizabeth Fenwick at the price of Rs. 20,317/-, and the other at Simla, from one Francis Mendes for Rs. 13000/- ; (*Letters and Documents* No. 131, p. 266 ; also pp. 123, 138, 151, 172 and 187). In addition to the above Rammohun also had his famous Maniktala gardenhouse which was built for him according to his instructions, by his half-brother Ramtanu Roy. The last mentioned house was furnished in English style, where Rammohun used to meet and entertain many of his eminent Indian and European friends and acquaintances.

The Jorasanko house was probably sold off sometime between 1805 and 1815 ; for we hear of it no more after Rammohun's final settlement in Calcutta. The Maniktala garden-house came into Rammohun's possession probably sometime later than 1814. For the case-records do not mention it among the houses said to have been acquired by him up to that year. The Simla house was his family residence and is now house No. 85 Amherst Street. The Maniktala garden house is identical with mansion No. 113 Upper Circular Road now converted into the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, North District, Calcutta. The sites of the Jorasanko and the Chowranghee houses have not been located.

From a sale notice published in the *Samāchār Darpan* dated January 9, 1830, it appears that the Maniktala garden-house was put to auction on the 21st January 1830, a few

months before Rammohun's departure for England (*Samibād-patre Sekāler Kathā* compiled and edited by Brajendranath Banerji Vol. I, 3rd edition, Calcutta 1356 B. S. pp. 248-49). We have no knowledge of the final disposal of the Chowranghee house. The Simla house (85 Amherst Street) is still in possession of a branch of the Roy family.

Mr. Brajendranath Banerji thinks that the Maniktala garden-house is identical with the one purchased by Rammohun from Mr. Francis Mendes (*Rammohun Roy* pp. 35-36). There are two arguments against this view. First, the Maniktala house is known to have been "built" for Rammohun by the latter's cousin Ramtanu Roy. It was not a "purchased" mansion. Secondly the case-records cited above, invariably speak of the house purchased from Mr. Mendes, as the "Simla house" and never refer to it as having stood at Maniktala. The Amherst Street house, traditionally known as the Simla family residence of Rammohun, has therefore a greater claim of identity with it.

## II

Though a believer in Universal Theism Rammohun's religious and philosophical thought remained firmly grounded in the *Vedānta*. While retaining throughout his life a great admiration for the ethical teachings of Christianity, he nonetheless regarded Hinduism as metaphysically and spiritually the most advanced religion in the world. This has been testified to by the Abbe Gregoire, Bishop of Blois (France) who says about Rammohun : "He asserts likewise that he has found nothing in European books equal to the scholastic philosophy of the Hindus....." (quoted in *The Father of Modern India : Rammohun Roy Centenary Commemoration Volume*, Part II p. 162). To Chandrasekhar Dev, one of his disciples, Rammohun also stated in reply to a query as to which of Hinduism and Christianity was the better system of religion : "The Hindus seem to have made greater progress in sacred learning than the Jews, at least when the Upanishads were written....If religion consists of the blessings of self-knowledge and of improved notions of God and his attributes



and a system of morality holds a subordinate place, I certainly prefer the Vedas.” (See Chandrasekher Dev’s English article *Reminiscences of Rammohun Roy* in the *Tattvabodhinī Patrika* No 351, Aghrahāyana 1794 Śaka, pp. 139-40.)

In his famous address (dated December 11, 1823) to Lord Amherst, he no doubt pleaded for the introduction of the western system of education, including a curriculum of studies chiefly in western science and technology, in this country, and expressed his opinion against the retention of abstract things like the metaphysical speculations of the Vedānta in the future educational syllabus of India. (For the text of this address, see Appendix II) This is however by no means an indictment of the Vedānta as such. Here Rammohun was contrasting two systems of education,—the medieval Indian and the modern European,—and advocating the introduction of the latter. His statement on the occasion should accordingly be judged with reference to this particular context. It is also important to remember in this connection that Rammohun was responsible for the establishment of a *Vedānta College* in Calcutta some time before 1826 entirely on his individual initiative and at his own expense. The purpose behind the move was obviously the dissemination of the teachings of the Vedānta. (See *The Father of Modern India : Rammohun Roy Centenary Commemoration Volume*. Part II p. 41.)

Rammohun’s extant works on the Vedānta are the following :

Bengali :

- (a) *Vedāntagrantha* (Calcutta 1815)
- (b) *Vedāntasāra* (Calcutta 1815 or 1816)
- (c) *Talabakaropanishat* or *Kenopanishat* ( Bengali Translation) (Calcutta 1816)
- (d) *Ishopanishat* (Bengali Translation) Calcutta 1816)
- (e) *Kāthopanishat* (Bengali Translation) (Calcutta 1817)
- (f) *Māṇḍukyopanishat* (Bengali Translation) (Calcutta 1817)
- (g) *Muṇḍakopanishat* (Bengali Translation) (Calcutta 1819)

- (h) *Ātmānātmaviveka* of Śaṅkarāchārya (Bengali Translation) (Calcutta 1819)

Hindusthāni :

- (a) *Vedāntagrantha* (Hindusthani Translation) (Calcutta 1815 ?)  
 (b) *Vedāntasāra* (Hindusthani Translation) (Calcutta 1815 or 1816 ?)

English :

- (a) *Translation of an Abridgment of the Vedānta* (Calcutta 1816)  
 (b) *Translation of the Kena Upanishad* (Calcutta 1816)  
 (c) *Translation of the Ishopanishad* (Calcutta 1816)  
 (d) *Translation of the Muṇḍaka Upanishad* (Calcutta 1819)  
 (e) *Translation of the Kāṭha Upanishad* (Calcutta 1819)

German : *Auflosung des Wedant* (Jena 1817)

Dutch : *Vertaling van Verscheidene voername Boeken, Pladtsen en Teksten van de Veddas*. (Kampen 1840). (Apparently a posthumous publication)

Besides the above books Rammohun is known to have published some other works on the subject. For example we may refer to his editions of the original Sanskrit texts of a number of *Upanishads* such as the *Isha*, the *Kena*, the *Kāṭha* the *Muṇḍaka* etc. with commentaries in Sanskrit, as well as that of the entire commentary of Śaṅkara on the *Brahma-Sūtras* (*Raja Rammohun Rāya-Pranīta Granthāvalī* edited by Rajnarayan Basu and Ananda Chandra Vedāntavagis, Calcutta 1880, p. 812). Rammohun is further said to have published either editions or translations of at least two other *Upanishads*, the *Chhāndogya* and the *Śvetāśvatara*, but copies of these have not yet been found (Ibid p. 812). A Bengali verse translation of the *Bhagavat-Gītā* was also published by him but unhappily this too remains as yet untraced. He held the *Gītā* in high esteem and would often say to his friends, "who would care to listen to one that does not listen to the *Gītā*?" (Nagendranath Chatterjee, *Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rayer Jibancharit* 5th Ed. p. 346). Rammohun is thus the predecessor of the great modern translators and



commentators of the *Gītā* in India, including Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi. Rammohun's edition of Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtras* was published in 1740 Śaka (1818 A.D.) from Calcutta in Bengali type. It has now become extremely rare. The Government Sanskrit College Library, Calcutta, possesses two copies of it (Catalogue of Sanskrit Books in the Government Sanskrit College Library, Calcutta,—*Vedānta* Nos. 239 and 240).

We have taken into account here exclusively Rammohun's works on texts of the *Vedānta* philosophy. By publishing the *Vedāntagrantha* (1815) which is an elaborate commentary on the celebrated *Brahma-Sūtras* Rammohun became the first commentator of the *Vedānta* in the modern age. His position as a *Vedānta* philosopher has been ably discussed by :

(a) Chandrasekhar Basu *Vedānta-Praveśa* (in Bengali) (Calcutta, 1282 B. S.) pp. 148—65.

(b) Nagendranath Chatterjee *Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rayer Jiban-charit* (in Bengali) (5th edition) Chapters IV and V (pp. 44—165).

(c) Dhirendranath Chowdhury *Vedāntavāgis Dharmer Tattva O Sāadhan* (in Bengali) (Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta) Chapter VIII. pp. 232—44.

(d) Ishan Chandra Roy 'Rammohun as a Bhāṣyakāra' *Indian Messenger* Vol. LVIII No. 3 (Maghotsava Number 1940) pp. 51—52.

### III

For a somewhat sketchy account of the *Atmīya Sabhā* see Brajendranath Banerji's article 'Societies founded by Rammohun Roy for Religious Reform' in the *Modern Review* April 1935, pp. 415-19. The best account of the friends and followers of Rammohun Roy during this period will be found in Manmathanath Ghosh's paper on the "Friends and Followers of Rammohun" in *The Father of Modern India* (Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume) Part II pp. 124-32. For an exhaustive study of the *Atmīya Sabhā*

see Prabhat Chandra Ganguli's serial Bengali article "Ātmīya Sabhār Kathā" in the *Tattvakaumudi* vol. 76, Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24 ; vol. 77, Nos. 1 and 5.

#### IV

Miss Collet's account of Hariharananda and his intimacy with and influence over Rammohun Roy is rather meagre. It is not correct to say that Rammohun met Hariharananda for the first time at Rangpur. Hariharananda's original name was Nandakumar Vidyālaṅkāra and he came to be known as Hariharananda Tirthaśvāmī Kulabadhūta after he had renounced the world and become a *Sannyasī*. He knew Rammohun from the latter's boyhood and the two remained on intimate terms of friendship ever since. Testifying for Rammohun in the case *Govindaprasad Roy vs. Rammohun Roy*, Hariharananda made the following statement : "Saith that he hath known the Defendant Rammohun Roy from the time that the said Defendant attained the age of fourteen years and hath ever since been on the most intimate terms with him" (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* No. 113, p. 174). A native of the village of Palpara in the Hooghly district, he roamed about in different places as a wandering hermit and was with his old friend Rammohun Roy at Rangpur. He accompanied the latter to Calcutta. Both at Rangpur and at Calcutta they had animated discussions of the Śāstras. Hariharananda participated in the meetings of the Ātmīya Sabhā and held progressive views, an instance of which is furnished by a letter he wrote to the *India Gazette* on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 1818, denouncing the evil custom of *Sati* (quoted in the *Calcutta Journal*, April 11, 1819. J. K. Majumdar, *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 56, pp 112-14). Hariharananda was a follower of the *Tantra* and is famous for his edition of the *Kulārṇava Tantra* and a learned commentary on the *Mahānirvāna Tantra*. He died at Benaras in 1832. (A brief life-sketch of Hariharananda is to be found in Brajendranath Banerji's pamphlet *Ramchandra Vidyavagis, Hariharananda Tirthaśvāmī Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala*, No. 9, pp. 29—32).



As a result of his close association with Hariharananda, Rammohun's thought seems to have been deeply influenced by the philosophy of *Tantra*. See on this point Bhudev Mukherji's chapter "*Raja Rammohun Raya O Tantra Śāstra*" in his *Vividha Prabandha* Part II Chinsura 1327 B. S., pp. 143—49; for a detailed study of the subject see Dilip Kumar Biswas's article *Raja Rammohun O Tantra* in the Bengali Weekly *Desh*, 19th Jaistha 1352 B. S. pp. 163—67.

Pandit Ramchandra Vidyavagiś the youngest brother of Hariharananda was a close associate of Rammohun Roy and became the first *āchārya* (minister) of the Brahmo Samaj.

Nagendranath Chatterjee mentions a highly interesting anecdote regarding Hariharananda's coming to Calcutta to meet Rammohun Roy. The story is slightly different from the account we have given above (*Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rayer Jiban Charit* 5th Ed. pp. 706—08).

As Hariharananda did not know English, it has been surmised by many that his letter published in the *India Gazette* was drafted by Rammohun himself.

## V

The Hindu College was established on the 20th January 1817. That Rammohun knew and whole heartedly supported the scheme of the establishment of this institution, is beyond any doubt. In fact he stood aside only because he feared that his orthodox countrymen would not co-operate with the scheme, if he would have anything to do with it. "There was no difficulty," writes Peary Chand Mitra, "in getting Rammohun Roy to renounce his connection, as he valued the education of his countrymen more than the empty flourish of his name as a committee-man" (*A Biographical Sketch of David Hare*, Reprint, Calcutta 1949, p. 6). The inner story is clearly brought out in a letter of Sir Edward Hyde East, dated the 18th May 1816, to Mr. J. Harrington. The following extract from the letter given by Mr. Brajendranath Banerji in his article "Rammohun Roy as an Educational Pioneer" (*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* Vol XVI, Pt. II pp. 154—75)

throws interesting light on the orthodox opposition to Rammohun Roy so far as this educational scheme was concerned. "The meeting was accordingly held at my house on the 14th of May, 1816, at which 50 and upwards of the most respectable Hindu inhabitants of rank or wealth attended, including also the principal Pandits ;.....Talking afterwards with several of the company, before I proceeded to open the business of the day, I found that one of them in particular, a Brahmin of good caste, and a man of wealth and influence, was mostly set against Rammohun Roy... He expressed a hope that no subscription would be received from Rammohun Roy. I asked, why not ? 'Because he had chosen to separate himself from us, and to attack our religion'. 'I do not know what Rammohun's religion is...not being acquainted or having had any communication with him ; but I hope that my being a Christian, and a sincere one, to the best of my ability, will be no reason for your refusing my subscription to your undertaking'...he answered readily..."No, not at all ; we shall be glad of your money ; but it is a different thing with Rammohun Roy, who is a Hindu, and yet has publicly reviled us, and written against us and our religion'...". We can do no better than quote the comments of Mr. Banerji who seems to echo Peary Chand Mitra : "The leading Hindus of Calcutta disliked his association with it, as he was regarded by them as a heretic... . Rammohun therefore very wisely withdrew from the movement lest the objects of the institution, should be frustrated in consequence of his name appearing on the Committee of Management". See also Jogesh Chandra Bagal's article, "The Origins of the Hindu College" (*Presidency College Centenary Volume*, Calcutta 1956, pp 299-305, particularly p. 300) ; and also his *Vanglar Uchha Siksha* Visva-Bharati 1360 B. S. p. 5. It may be mentioned here that the proposal for the foundation of a Higher Institution for dissemination of English education was first made by David Hare before a small assembly of friends in Rammohun Roy's house and it was supported by everybody present.

How strong and bitter orthodox opposition was to Rammohun and his ideals, in the matter, may be further



illustrated by an extract from a letter (dated January 19, 1832) from Raja Radhakanta Dev to Mr. Wilson concerning a proposal for the appointment of Rammohun's friend and disciple, Mr. William Adam, as one of the teachers of the College. Radhakanta, the leader of the orthodox camp, and a director of the College writes : 'For my part, I cannot entrust the morals and education of those I regard, to such an one that was once a Missionary, then a *Vaidantic or disciple of Rammohun Roy* and lastly a unitarian (italics ours—*Editors*) (quoted in Jogesh Chandra Bagal *Radhakanta Dev Sahitya-Sadhak Charitmala*, No. 20, p. 14). Mr. Adam was not appointed. The letter speaks for itself and explains very well why Rammohun himself had to stand back at the time of the foundation of the College !

Also it is not generally remembered that Dewan Baidyanath Mukherjee, who among contemporary Bengalis rendered remarkably valuable services in connection with the foundation of this great institution and became its first native secretary (vide Peary Chand Mitra *David Hare* pp. 5-8), was a close associate of Rammohun Roy and a member of the latter's Atmīya Sabhā. It is not unlikely that he drew inspiration, at least in part, from Rammohun's ideas and advice.

## VI

The 'polemical combat' between Rammohun Roy and Subhrahmanya Śāstrī took place in the house of Biharilal Chaubey at Barabazar, Calcutta. Rammohun's reply to Subhramanya Śāstri was published in 1820 in four languages viz. Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi and English. The English translation is entitled *An Apology for the Pursuit of Final Beatitude independently of Brahmanical Observances*. Pandit Hazari Prasad Dvivedi informs us that Biharilal Chaubey was a notable poet in Hindi, belonging to the group of the famous Bharatendu Harishchandra (vide his article "Hindi Bhashay Rammohun" in the *Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume Part II* p. 466).

## VII

It would be a mistake to suppose that the lawsuits in which Rammohun was involved as also the one concerning his son Radhaprasad, in any way hampered his religious and philanthropic activities. The cases against Rammohun continued with breaks almost throughout the period from 1817 to 1830. During the years 1825 and 1826 Radhaprasad had to face his trial on a charge of embezzlement. (For a brief account of all these cases see Note V to chapter II.) Though these cases involved him in ruinous expenses, broke his health and resulted in the death of his wife, Rammohun remained unperturbed and calmly went on with his campaign against the religious and social evils of the country. During the above period we find him engaged in constant polemical war with his orthodox Hindu and Christian opponents, carrying on a ceaseless struggle against the custom of burning widows alive, sharply criticizing the caste system by editing and translating the first chapter of the *Vajrasūchī*, making strenuous efforts to spread western education and learning in the country, striving for the liberty of the Press, and laying the foundation of the *Brahmo Samaj* ! During the two years, specifically referred to by the continuator, "Rammohun was in regular attendance on Mr. W. Adam's Unitarian services and was openly identified with the Unitarian Committee",—an act, perhaps much more heinous in the eyes of his orthodox Hindu opponents than holding meetings of the *Atmīya Sabhā* !

## VIII

The first Bengali tract against *Satī* from the pen of Rammohun and its English translation were certainly published in 1818. But he had started his drive against this evil custom certainly a few years before that. Mrs. Frances Keith Martin in a letter dated November 26, 1829, published in the *Bengal Hurkaru* dated November 28, 1829, pointed out that while the government of Lord William Bentinck might be given its due share of credit for the final abolition of *Satī*, the



great services of Rammohun Roy with regard to it, should never be forgotten. In this connection two of her utterances deserve to be quoted : “Your observation that ‘Europe will resound with praises on the exertions of the Indian Government on this occasion’ should certainly have been modified ; the series of grievances to which its imbecility in this respect has given protracted continuance, can surely not be cancelled by the mere tardy introduction of a measure which a disgraceful apprehension of danger alone prevented from being adopted—and which...would not now in the utmost probability be brought into effect...but for the powerful though unacknowledged aid of the great Hindu Philosopher, Rammohun Roy,...” ; and again a little later “at least to those prodigies of fortitude, the Indian widows, may the present era prove a Jubilee which enfranchises them for ever,—and in commemorating the amiable and the highly politic administration of Lord Bentinck, may they never cease to remember the glowing sympathy, intelligence and fearless energy displayed through a course of *eighteen years*, by their great and at length successful advocate, Rammohun Roy” (first italics ours—*Editors*) (J K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 80, pp. 150-51). It appears therefore as this extremely specific and uncontradicted statement indicates, that Rammohun’s endeavours against *Satī* began eighteen years ago from 1829 i.e. in 1811-12. At that time he was living in Rangpur but he must have paid occasional visits to Calcutta and also to his native village. The burning of his sister-in-law in the funeral pyre of her husband took place, if at all, in 1812, and there is no inherent improbability in the story that this family incident was at the root of his firm resolve to try to wipe out the inhuman custom. Even before he had employed his pen against it, he roamed about in the burning grounds of Calcutta and tried “to avert the *Suttee* sacrifices by earnest persuasion.” (See above p. 89.) “In these efforts he had often to incur the displeasure and insult of the relatives of the *Suttee*.” Rammohun however remained calm in the face of all provocations. Nagendranath Chatterjee mentions a typical instance in his *Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rāyer Jibancharit* 5th Ed. p. 358.

Reference may also be made in this connection to a meeting held at the Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta, on the 10th November 1832, in order to express the gratitude of the progressive citizens "for the confirmation by the King in Council...of the order for suppressing the burning of Hindoo widows issued by the Governor General in Council" on December 4, 1829. The meeting was presided over by Dwarakanath Tagore and was attended by a large number of prominent Indian and European citizens of Calcutta. It adopted a unanimous resolution offering thanks to Raja Rammohun Roy for his untiring efforts in the cause of the abolition of the *Satī* evil. Among those who paid eloquent tributes to Rammohun on this occasion, was Krishnamohan Banerjee one of the most brilliant among the contemporary Bengali converts to Christianity. (J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 117. pp. 199-205). It may also be noted that a correspondent of the *Bengal Chronicle* as quoted in the *Asiatic Journal* for May 1831, emphatically asserts that the abolition of *Satī* had been possible chiefly due to the exertions of Rammohun Roy and Dwarkanath Tagore and all praise for the reform should accordingly go to these two individuals (*Ibid* No. 108, p. 182). For a connected account of the anti-Sati movement in Bengal in the nineteenth century, see now A. Mukherjee's article "Movement for the Abolition of *Satī* in Bengal" *Bengal, Past and Present* vol. LXXVII, Part I, Serial No. 143, pp. 20-41. This is a good summary of available evidence but does not add substantially to our knowledge of the subject.



## CHAPTER IV

(1820—1824)

### REGULAR AND IRREGULAR CAMPAIGNS AGAINST TRINITARIAN ORTHODOXY

1820. *Precepts of Jesus and Appeal to the Christian Public* in defence thereof.
1821. *Second Appeal to the Christian Public*. Mr. Adam's Conversion. Letter of June 21. *Brahmanical Magazine*, I., II., III. Sept.—Calcutta Unitarian Committee formed. Dec. 4—Rammohun starts the *Sambad Kaumudī*.
1822. (Baisākha) Starts the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*. Publishes *Brief Remarks on Ancient Female Rights*. About this time starts Anglo-Hindu School. Publishes *Answers to Four Questions*.
1823. Monthly Meetings. Jan. 30—*Third and Final Appeal to the Christian Public*. April—Memorial against Government Press Order of March 14. May—Letters in *Hurkaru*. Ram Doss papers. Cessation of *Mirat*. June 16—The Raja of Burdwan begins his law-suit against Rammohun. Nov. 15—*Brahmanical Magazine*, IV. Nov.—Letter to Lord Amherst. *Humble Suggestions to his Countrymen who believe in One God*. Signs Appeal for Scottish Presbyterian Missionaries. Publishes *Medicine for the Sick*.
1824. Feb. 2. Letters to Rev. H. Ware on the *Prospects of Christianity*. March 11—*Appeal* for famine in S. India.

We now enter upon a wholly new scene of Rammohun's career,—his relations to Christianity. It may be remembered that in his letter of 1817

to Mr. Digby, he said :—"The consequence of my long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth has been that I have found the doctrine of Christ more conducive to moral principles, and more adapted for the use of rational beings, than any other which have come to my knowledge."<sup>1</sup> With his habitual thoroughness, he took the trouble to acquire the Greek and Hebrew languages (the latter he learned, it is said, from a Jew, in six months) that he might gain a full understanding of both the Old and the New Testaments ; and the remarkable mastery of their contents which is shown in his later writings bears witness to the success of his study. The result was the publication, in 1820, of his celebrated work entitled *The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness ; extracted from the Books of the New Testament, ascribed to the Four Evangelists. With translations into Sanskrit and Bengali*. As the preface to this book has, I think, been but imperfectly understood, and as it throws important light on the then state of his mind, I give it nearly entire :—

"A conviction in the mind of its total ignorance of the nature and of the specific attributes of the Godhead, and a sense of doubt respecting the real essence of the soul, give rise to feelings of great dissatisfaction with our limited powers, as well as with all human acquirements which fail to inform us on these interesting points.—On the other hand, a notion of the existence of a supreme superintending power, the Author and Preserver of this harmonious system, who has organized and who regulates such an infinity of celestial and terrestrial objects ; and a due estimation of that law which teaches that man should do unto others as he would wish to

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1. See above, p. 71—Editors.



be done by, reconcile us to human nature, and tend to render our existence agreeable to ourselves and profitable to the rest of mankind. The former of these sources of satisfaction, viz., a belief in God, prevails generally ; being derived either from tradition and instruction, or from an attentive survey of the wonderful skill and contrivance displayed in the works of nature. The latter, although it is partially taught also in every system of religion with which I am acquainted, is principally inculcated by Christianity. This essential characteristic of the Christian religion I was for a long time unable to distinguish as such, amidst the various doctrines I found insisted upon in the writings of Christian authors, and in the conversation of those teachers of Christianity with whom I have had the honour of holding communication. Amongst those opinions, the most prevalent seems to be, that no one is justly entitled to the appellation of Christian who does not believe in the divinity of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, as well as in the divine nature of God, the Father of all created beings. Many allow a much greater latitude to the term Christian, and consider it as comprehending all who acknowledge the Bible to contain the revealed will of God, however they may differ from others in their interpretations of particular passages of scripture ; whilst some require from him who claims the title of Christian, only an adherence to the doctrines of Christ, as taught by himself, without insisting on implicit confidence in those of the Apostles, as being, except when speaking from inspiration, like other men, liable to mistake and error. That they were so is obvious from the several instances of difference of opinion amongst the Apostles recorded in the Acts and Epistles."

On the relative claims of these different conceptions of Christianity, which had been so extensively and confidently debated, he declines entering into discussion, and continues thus :—

"I confine my attention at present to the task of laying before my fellow creatures the words of Christ, with a translation from the English into Sanskrit and the

language of Bengal<sup>2</sup>. I feel persuaded that by separating from the other matters contained in the New Testament, the moral precepts found in that book, these will be more likely to produce the desirable effect of improving the hearts and minds of men of different persuasions and degrees of understanding. For, historical and some other passages are liable to the doubts and disputes of free thinkers and anti-Christians, especially, miraculous relations, which are much less wonderful than the fabricated tales handed down to the natives of Asia, and consequently could be apt at best to carry little weight with them. On the contrary, moral doctrines, tending evidently to the maintenance of the peace and harmony of mankind at large, are beyond the reach of metaphysical perversion, and intelligible alike to the learned and to the unlearned. This simple code of religion and morality is so admirably calculated to elevate men's ideas to high and liberal notions of one God, who has equally subjected all living creatures, without distinction of caste, rank, or wealth, to change, disappointment, pain and death, and has equally admitted all to be partakers of the bountiful mercies which he has lavished over nature, and is also so well fitted to regulate the conduct of the human race in the discharge of their various duties to God, to themselves, and to society, that I cannot but hope the best effects from its promulgation in the present form."

From this we may see that the very last thing Rammohun desired or anticipated for his book was theological controversy. It was that from which he was trying to escape. To him, the "essential characteristic of the Christian religion" was its ideal humanity, its tendency to promote "the peace and harmony of mankind at large," and to raise them to "high and liberal notions of one God who has equally admitted all to be partakers

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2. Rammohun did not ultimately publish the contemplated Sanskrit and Bengali translations of the *Precepts*.—*Editors*.



of ( his ) bountiful mercies." It was this which he thought would improve the hearts and minds of "men of different persuasions," and in his sanguine soul he could not but "hope the best effects from its promulgation in the present form." What effect his work might have produced on his countrymen if he and they had been able to discuss it together without interruption, can never now be known. For before he had had time to make the translations into Sanskrit and Bengali which he had somewhat prematurely announced on his title page, the book was attacked by the chief missionaries of the day in their periodical *The Friend of India* and Rammohun was at once immersed in a sea of controversy which lasted for years. A unique opportunity was thus worse than wasted, and made the occasion of increased strife. No doubt all this was providentially over-ruled for eventual good ; but it is impossible not to regret that the Christians of the day and hour had not been wiser.

Here we must digress a little. At this time (1820) Christianity was very imperfectly represented in Bengal. Henry Martyn was dead, and Reginald Heber had not yet arrived. The bishopric of Calcutta, established in 1814, was occupied by Dr. Middleton, a man of scholarly attainments and plodding industry, but of somewhat rigid and unsympathetic temperament. The Church of Scotland was represented by the Rev. Dr. Bryce, a clever and rather liberal-minded man, whose ministry Rammohun attended for some time, but who was so eccentric and indiscreet that he gradually alienated most of his friends, and Rammohun among them.



IV Tarachand Chakravarti  
First Secretary of the Brahmo Samaj





The chief missionary activity of that time was in the hands of the English Dissenters, especially the celebrated Baptist Mission of Serampore, near Calcutta, under the presidency of Drs. Carey and Marshman. Carey was originally a poor shoemaker, with very little general education, but with a great taste for languages, and an ardent desire to convert the heathen. Marshman was a successful and earnest school-master and a most valuable colleague to the enthusiastic but unpractical Carey. Their joint mission was started in 1799,<sup>3</sup> and they had been working zealously ever since. How soon Rammohun made their acquaintance does not appear, but their "*Periodical Account*" for the year 1816 contains the following notices of him and his doings :

"Rama-Mohuna-Raya, a very rich Rarhee Brahmun of Calcutta, is a respectable Sanskrit scholar, and so well versed in Persian, that he is called Mouluvee-Rama-Mohuna-Raya : he also writes English with correctness, and reads with ease English Mathematical and metaphysical works. He has published, in Bengalee, one or two philosophical works from the Sanskrit which he hopes may be useful in leading his countrymen to renounce idolatry. Europeans breakfast at his house, at a separate table, in the English fashion ; he has paid us a visit at Serampore, and at a late interview, after relating an anecdote of Krishna, relative to a petty theft of this God, he added, 'The sweeper of my house would not do such an act, and can I worship a god sunk lower than the man who

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3. The Serampore Baptist Mission can be said to have been formally started in January, 1800, with the arrival of William Carey at Serampore. See J. C. Marshman *Life and Times of Carey Marshman and Ward* vol. I (London 1859) pp. 124-25.—*Editors*.



washes my floors ?' He is at present a simple theist, admires Jesus Christ, but knows not his *need* of the atonement. He has not renounced his caste, and this enables him to visit the richest families of Hindoos. He is said to be very moral ; but is pronounced to be a most wicked man by the strict Hindoos.'<sup>4</sup>

Of this man Mr. Yates writes thus, in a letter dated August, 1816 :—

'I was introduced to him about a year ago : before this, he was not acquainted with any one who cared for his soul. Some time after I introduced Eustace Carey to him, and we have had repeated conversations with him. When I first knew him he would talk only on metaphysical subjects such as the eternity of matter, the nature and qualities of evidence &c. but he has lately become much more humble, and disposed to converse about the Gospel. He has many relations, Brahmuns, and has established religious worship among them. He maintains the unity of God, and hates all heathen idolatries. He visited Eustace lately and stayed to family prayer, with which he was quite delighted. Eustace gave him Dr. Watt's Hymns ; he said he would treasure them up in his heart. He has been to Serampore once, and has engaged to come and see me in the course of a few weeks. He has offered Eustace a piece of ground for a scoool.'

One might have thought that these worthy men, who expressed such care for Rammohun's soul, would have given some sort of fraternal welcome to his spontaneous recommendation of the teach-

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4. See *Periodical Accounts relative to the Baptist Missionary Society* Vol. VI (Bristol 1817) No. 31 (From June 1815 to January 1816) pp. 106-07 ; we are grateful to the present authorities of the Serampore College for kindly permitting us to consult the volume and verify Miss Collet's reference, at the library of the College.—*Editors*.

5. *Ibid.* pp. 108 n.-109 n.—*Editors*.

ings of Christ to his countrymen. But unfortunately they belonged to the narrowest school of Calvinistic orthodoxy, and not only held the doctrine of the Atonement in its harshest form, but were so engrossed by it as to regard that alone as "the Gospel." A review of Rammohun's book soon appeared in the *Friend of India*, by a "Christian Missionary,"—Rev. Deocar Schmidt, who feared that the "*Precepts*" might "greatly injure the cause of truth." Dr. Marshman added some editorial comments, in which he spoke of Rammohun as "an intelligent Heathen, whose mind is as yet completely opposed to the *grand design* of the Saviour's becoming incarnate."<sup>6</sup>

All this hurt Rammohun's feelings very much, and he quickly replied with "*An Appeal to the Christian Public in defence of the 'Precepts of Jesus,' by a Friend to Truth*." In this he defended himself with much spirit from the charge of being a "heathen" (which term he regarded as virtually synonymous with an idolator), and claimed to be "a believer in one true and living God," and not only that, but also "in the truths revealed in the Christian system" He proceeds :—

"I should hope neither the Reviewer nor the Editor can be justified in inferring the heathenism of the Compiler, from the facts of his extracting and publishing the moral doctrines of the New Testament, under the title of a "Guide to Peace and Happiness"—his styling the "Precepts of Jesus" a code of Religion and morality,—his believing God to be the Author

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6. For the details of the controversy between Rammohun and the Serampore Missionaries, see Note I at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors*.



and Preserver of the Universe,—or his considering those sayings as adapted to regulate the conduct of the whole human race in the discharge of all the duties required of them. . . . Although he was born a Brahman he not only renounced idolatry at a very early period of his life, but published at that time a treatise in Arabic and Persian against that system, and no sooner acquired a tolerable knowledge of English than he made his desertion of idol worship known to the Christian world by his English publication—a renunciation that, I am sorry to say, brought severe difficulties upon him, by exciting the displeasure of his parents, and subjecting him to the dislike of his near as well as distant relations, and to the hatred of nearly all his countrymen for several years. I therefore presume that among his declared enemies, who are aware of those facts, no one who has the least pretension to truth would venture to apply the designation of heathen to him”.

He then vigorously defends the principle on which his selection of Precepts was made, and illustrates it by copious and cogent passages from the words of Christ Himself. He recalls the emphasis laid by Christ on the two-fold law of love as that on which hung all the Law and the Prophets; His charge to the rich young man to keep the commandments—“This do and thou shalt live”; and the description of the last Judgment in Matt. xxv., which declares eternal destiny decided by the discharge or neglect of the duties of human beneficence.

“These precepts (he proceeds) separated from the mysterious dogmas and historical records, appear to the Compiler to contain not only the essence of all that is necessary to instruct mankind in their civil duties, but also the best and only means of obtaining the forgiveness of our sins, the favour of God, and strength to overcome our passions and to keep His commandments,”

After this he goes on to point out how unsatisfactory have been results of the missionary methods of propagating Christianity.

The Compiler, residing in the same spot where European missionary gentlemen and others for a period of upwards of twenty years have been, with a view to promote Christianity, distributing in vain amongst the natives numberless copies of the complete Bible, written in different languages, could not be altogether ignorant of the causes of their disappointment. He, however, never doubted their zeal for the promulgation of Christianity, nor the accuracy of their statement with regard to immense sums of money being annually expended in preparing vast numbers of copies of the Scriptures ; but he had seen with regret that they have completely counteracted their own benevolent efforts, by introducing all the dogmas and mysteries taught in Christian Churches to people by no means prepared to receive them ; and that they have been so incautious and inconsiderate in their attempts to enlighten the natives of India, as to address their instructions to them in the same way as if they were reasoning with persons brought up in a Christian country, with those dogmatical notions imbibed from their infancy. The consequence has been, that the natives in general, instead of benefiting by the perusal of the Bible, copies of which they always receive gratuitously, exchange them very often for blank paper ; and generally use several of the dogmatical terms in their native language as a mark of slight in an irreverent manner ; the mention of which is repugnant to my feelings. . . . It has been owing to their beginning with the introduction of mysterious dogmas and of relations that at first sight appear incredible, that, notwithstanding every exertion on the part of our divines, I am not aware that we can find a single respectable Moosulman or Hindoo, who was not in want of the common comforts of life, once glorified with the truth of Christianity, constantly adhering to it.

From what I have already stated, I hope no one will infer that I feel ill disposed towards the Missionary establishments in this country. This is far from being the case. I pray for



their augmentation, and that their members may remain in the happy enjoyment of life in a climate so generally inimical to European constitution ; for in proportion to the increase of their number, sobriety, moderations, temperance, and good behaviour, have been diffused among their neighbours as the necessary consequence of their company, conversation, and good example.

A letter written at this time to a friend, Colonel B ——— gives Rammohun's own account of the controversy which had been commenced.

Calcutta *September*, 5, 1820.

As to the opinion intimated by Sir Samuel J ———, respecting the medium course in Christian dogmas, I never have attempted to oppose it. I regret only that the followers of Jesus, in general, should have paid much greater attention to enquiries after his nature than to the observance of his commandments, when we are well aware that no human acquirements can ever discover the nature even of the most common and visible things and moreover, that such inquiries are not enjoined by the divine revelation. On this consideration I have compiled several passages of the New Testament which I thought essential to Christianity, and published them under the designation of *Precepts of Jesus*, at which the Missionaries of Srirampoor [Serampore] have expressed great displeasure, and called me, in their review of the tracts, an injurer of the cause of truth. I was, therefore, under the necessity of defending myself in an "Appeal to the Christian Public", a few copies of which tract I have the pleasure to send you, under the care of Captain S——and entreat your acceptance of them.

I return with my sincere acknowledgments, the work which Sir S. J. was so kind as to lend me. May I request the favour of you to forward it to Sir S. J., as well as a copy of each of the pamphlets, with my best compliments, and to favour me with your and Sir S. J's opinion respecting my idea of Christianity, as expressed in those tracts, when an opportunity may occur ; as I am always open to conviction and correction ?

This appeal elicited certain "Remarks" from Dr. Marshman in the *Friend of India* of May 1820.<sup>7</sup> Dr. Marshman disavows any uncharitable purpose in the use of the word Heathen which, he thinks, "cannot be candidly construed into a term of reproach," but refuses to call Christian anyone who does not accept "the Divinity and Atonement of Jesus Christ, and the Divine Authority of the whole of the Holy Scriptures". Quite conformably to this narrow limitation of the term Christian, he passes on to a singularly negative version of Christianity.

The leading doctrines of the New Testament.....may be summed up in the two following positions : That God views all sin as to abominable that the death of Jesus Christ alone can expiate its guilt ; and that the human heart is so corrupt that it must be renewed by the Divine Spirit before a man can enter heaven.

In the first number of the quarterly series of the *Friend of India* published in September 1820, the worthy Baptist sets himself to prove this version of his faith from the sayings of Jesus.<sup>8</sup>

To this essay Rammohun replied in a "Second Appeal" published in 1821, nearly six times the length of the first. He repudiates any desire to challenge the credibility of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, or to put them on a level with the marvels of Hindu mythology. He had only recognised the fact that the Hindu mind was as it were sodden with stories of miracles, and he had hoped to direct his countrymen to those precepts

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7. See Note I at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.

8. See Note I at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.



the moral sublimity of which had first moved him to admiration of Christianity. He describes himself by implication as "labouring in the promulgation of Christianity."\* He then opposes the main positions advanced by Dr. Marshman. He disputes the consonance with justice of Dr. Marshman's theory of the atonement, but he declares that he has "repeatedly acknowledged Christ as the Redeemer, Mediator, and Intercessor with God on behalf of his followers." He confesses himself moved by his reverence for Christianity and its author to vindicate it from the charge of Polytheism, for he regards Trinitarianism as essentially polytheism. He has little difficulty in disposing of Dr. Marshman's endeavours to prove the doctrine of Trinity from the Old Testament. On the new Testament he resorts to exegetical methods familiar to Unitarians, in order to establish the impersonality of the Holy Spirit. On the baptismal formula he avers that "it is proper that those who receive" the Christian religion, "should be baptized in the name of the Father, who is the object of worship ; of the Son, who is the Mediator ; and of that influence by which spiritual blessings are conveyed to mankind, designated in the Scriptures as the Comforter, Spirit of Truth, or Holy Spirit." He makes an excursion into pre-Nicene history and recalls how "in the first and purest ages of Christianity, the followers of Christ entertained" very "different opinions on the subject of the distinction between Father, Son and

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\* "By me and by numerous other followers of Christ." The author further speaks of "himself or any other person labouring in the promulgation of Christianity."

Holy Spirit” without being excommunicated. The precepts of Jesus, which no other religion can equal much less surpass, do not, he insists, depend on the metaphysical arguments and mysteries with which they have been associated.]\*

By this time the controversy had, it will be seen, concentrated itself on two main points, which he thus defines in an “Advertisement” to the “Second Appeal.”

“First, that the ‘Precepts of Jesus’ which teach that love to God is manifested in beneficence towards our fellow-creatures, are a sufficient Guide to Peace and Happiness ; and secondly, that omnipresent God, who is the only proper object of religious veneration, is one and undivided in person.”

Naturally the last-named point soon became the main question at issue ; and as the Unity of God was the main passion of Rammohun’s life, he soon threw himself with his whole heart into the contest which was thus so strangely brought home to him from a quite unexpected quarter. At this point—the beginning of the year 1821,—we must stop to record a singular event which accentuated the controversy in no small degree.

[Rammohun’s studies in the Scriptures and interest in the Christian religion had led him into frequent intercourse with English missionaries. He appears in close co-operation with two members of the Baptist Mission at Serampore, Rev. William Yates and Rev. William Adam, both according to

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\* The passage enclosed in brackets was inserted by the Continuator with Miss Collet’s approval.



Rammohun's testimony "well reputed for their Oriental and classic acquirements." How this came about is related by Mr. Adam in a letter to the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society dated June 11, 1821 :—

I have for some time past been engaged with Rammohun Roy and Mr. Yates in translating the four Gospels into Bengali. The two translations of Dr. Carey and Mr. Ellerton are declared by Rammohun Roy to abound in the most flagrant violations of native idiom, and he accordingly applied to Mr. Yates and myself for our assistance in translating them anew from the original. This we readily have given. Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount is printed separately at the expense of the B—A—S—.

On September 30, 1822, Mr. Adam writes to Mr. Edward Poole :—

I am at present just finishing a careful revisal of a new translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew in Bengali, originally executed by Rammohun Roy, the Rev. Mr. Yates, and myself, Mr. Yates has since declined his assistance so that it now entirely rests with Rammohun Roy and myself.

The difficulty with Mr. Yates arose when the Revisers began with the fourth Gospel. They got as far as the third verse in safety, but there they struck on the Greek preposition *dia* and the Revision was wrecked. At first Mr. Yates agreed to translate "All things were made *through* him," but by the next session of the Committee he had discovered in the substitution of *through* for *by* a suggestion of Arianism and on the following day withdrew from the enterprise altogether on account of the tendency towards heresy which had transpired. During these discussions, Mr. Adam tells us. Rammohun "sat, pen in hand, in dignified reticence,

looking on listening, observing all, but saying nothing." This project and the manner of its termination naturally drew "heretic" and "heathen" into an intimacy more frequent and confidential, with the result that Mr. Adam finally renounced his belief in the doctrine of Trinity and avowed himself a Unitarian.

The arguments advanced in Rammohun's Second Appeal published about this time may be taken to indicate the kind of considerations which decided Mr. Adam.

This singular event was made public in the latter half of 1821.]\*

The story of Mr. Adam's conversion has been told so often and with such frequent inaccuracies that I am glad to be able to produce the following letter in which he communicates the fact to an English friend.

*Mr. William Adam to Mr. N. Wright.*

*Calcutta, May 7, 1821.*

It is now several months since I began to entertain some doubts respecting the Supreme Deity of Jesus Christ, suggested by frequent discussions with Rammohun Roy, whom I was endeavouring to bring over to the belief of that Doctrine, and in which I was joined by Mr. Yates, who also professed to experience difficulties on the subject. Since then I have been diligently engaged in studying afresh the Scriptures with a view to this subject, humbly seeking divine guidance and illumination, and I do not hesitate to confess that I am unable to remove the weighty objections which present themselves against this doctrine. I do not mean to say that there are no

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\* The passage between brackets was inserted by the Continuator with Miss Collet's approval.



difficulties in rejecting it, but the objections against it compared with the arguments for it, appear to me like a mountain compared with a molehill.†

We cannot wonder at the profound impression which this occurrence produced. At any time the fact of a Christian missionary being converted by "an intelligent heathen" would be sure to excite widespread remark. But in the days when Evangelical orthodoxy enjoyed an almost undisputed ascendancy, and in quarters like those of the Baptist Mission where the tradition of Calvinism stamped the dominant Evangelicalism with its own rigidity, the shock must have been startling in the extreme. The convert was half-humorously, half-savagely, called "The second fallen Adam."<sup>9</sup> The animosity usually harboured by the orthodox against a renegade was rendered doubly bitter by the fact that the conversion was apparently due to the dispassionate examination of the Scriptures by an open-minded Hindu, missionary ardour and Protestant devotion to the Bible being both wounded in their tenderest place. The Unitarians in England and America naturally accepted the intelligence as of a veritable Daniel come to judgment and were shaken, as we shall see by and by, into new missionary enthusiasm.

But the news was not made public property until the latter part of 1821, and before then Rammohun's literary and polemical activity had assumed certain fresh phases. Some explanation

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† At this point Miss Collet ceased writing. The rest of the work is from the hand of the Continuator. The point at which her revision of his manuscript ended is indicated later.

9. See Note I at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*

of the turn it took is suggested by an incident which occurred about this time.

Of this Mr. Adam is our informant. According to his narrative,—

“One day in the hot season, about mid-day, I was engaged in my usual studies, when I was informed that a native gentleman was at the gate of my compound and desired to see me. This was an unusual hour for a call. I went to the gate and found that it was Rammohun Roy, whom I instantly requested to alight from his carriage and enter the house. The unusualness of the hour was fully justified by the explanation he gave me. On invitation he had been to see Dr. Middleton, the Bishop of Calcutta. Rammohun Roy’s house was probably about two miles from the Bishop’s palace and my dwelling was intermediate between the two. He called on me both for refreshment to his body and sympathy in his mental trouble. His first request was that he should be permitted to remove his turban, which was of course granted, and the second that he should have some refreshment, but that before it was brought and he partook of it, my servants should be sent away, since if they had seen him eat under my roof they would have bruited abroad that he had lost caste. This was promptly and quietly attended to, and when he felt cool and refreshed, he proceeded to state what had disturbed his mind.

With much indignation he informed Mr. Adam that the Bishop had sent for him, had entered into a long argument to persuade him to accept of Christianity, and, not content with this singular stretch of the laws of hospitality, had wound up by expatiating on “the grand career which would open to him by a change of faith.” “He would be honoured in life and lamented in death,—honoured in England as well as in India ;—his name would descend to posterity as that of the modern Apostle of India.” The Bishop’s meaning was doubtless



innocent enough, but the keen truth-loving Hindu seemed to feel it as a modern version of the Tempter's "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." "The sting of the offence was this," reports Mr. Adam : "he was asked to profess the Christian religion, not on the force of evidence, or for the love of truth, or for the satisfaction of his conscience, or for the benefit of his fellow-men, but for the sake of the honour and glory and fame it might bring him. This was utterly abhorrent to Rammohun's mind. It alienated, repelled, and disgusted him." He never met the Bishop again.\*

As may readily be imagined, and as the foregoing incident shows, a very warm friendship was springing up between Rammohun and Mr. Adam. The latter, fortunately for us, left on record a great many of their mutual communications in letter and manuscript, which have been placed at the disposal of the writer of this work. His testimony to the impression made upon him by Rammohun's character may be here most properly cited :—

I was never more thoroughly, deeply, and constantly impressed than when in the presence of Rammohun Roy and in

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\* Bishop Middleton died July 8, 1822. His overtures to Rammohun Roy would most probably take place after *The Precepts of Jesus* came out, which was in the beginning of 1820. The incident occurred, Mr Adam informs us, during "the hot season." Mr. Adam's statement that "he never afterwards visited the Bishop", implies that a considerable interval elapsed before the Bishop's death. Hence we are safe in concluding that the time of the incident fell in hot season of 1820 or 1821.

friendly and confidential converse with him, that I was in the presence of a man of natural and inherent genius, of powerful understanding, and of determined will, a will determined with singular energy and uncontrollable self-direction, to lofty and generous purposes. He seemed to feel, to think, to speak, to act, as if he could not but do all this, and that he must and could do it only in and from and through himself, and that the application of any external influence, distinct from his own strong will, would be the annihilation of his being and identity. He would be free or not be at all. ....Love of freedom was perhaps the strongest passion of his soul,—freedom not of action merely, but of thought .....This tenacity of personal independence, this sensitive jealousy of the slightest approach to an encroachment on his mental freedom was accompanied with a very nice perception of the equal rights of others, even of those who differed most widely from him.\*

The effect on such a nature of the attitude assumed to him by organized Christianity in India can be readily conceived. A Brahman by birth, he had commended to his own countrymen the Precepts of Jesus as surpassing those of any other religion as a guide to peace and happiness, and he had undertaken to help in translating the whole of the four Gospels into Bengali. As a result he had been assailed by the Baptist editor, he had been forsaken by one of his Baptist co-translators whose orthodoxy deterred him from making a correct version ; and by the Anglican Bishop, he had been, as he understood, offered the bribe of world-wide fame, to induce him to accept Christianity. Such an experience of English Christianity in its Established and Nonconforming phases was not likely to conciliate Rammohun Roy. We can scarcely wonder

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\* "A Lecture on the Life and Labours of Rammohun Roy," by W. Adam. Calcutta : Roy & Co., 1879. pp. 22-25.



that the latter half of 1821 witnessed a vigorous polemic on his part against the tactics of Christian missionaries.

The *Samachar Darpan*, a periodical issued from the Mission Press at Serampore, came out on the 14th of July with an onslaught on the pantheism of the *Vedānta Śāstra*, arguing that while inconsistent with polytheism, it logically destroyed the reality of the universe and the responsibility of the human soul, as well as the perfectness of God. It also invited replies.<sup>10</sup> But on Rammohun taking the missionaries at their word and sending a reply, they, with a lack of fairness and indeed with a stupidity which was simply fatuous, refused to insert it.<sup>11</sup> Rammohun accordingly brought out under the name of his pandit, Śivaprasad Śarmā, *The Brahmanical Magazine*, as “a vindication of the Hindu religion against the attacks of Christian missionaries.” The first two numbers contain the provocative article reprinted from the *Samachar Darpan* and the suppressed reply. Rammohun is at great pains to represent the Vedāntic system as more of a monotheism than a pantheism. He firmly avers that God is the creator of the world, but grants that matter is eternal. “We find the phrases “God is all and in all,” in the Christian books ; and I suppose they do not mean by such words that pots, mats, &c. are gods. I am inclined to believe that by these terms they mean the omnipresence of God.” Similar language in the Vedānta could be similarly explained. Polytheism he represents as only an accommodation to the ignorance

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10. See Note I at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*

11. See Note I at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*





V Raja Rammohun Roy

After a coloured Steel-Engraving

From J. C. Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*

Kindly lent by the Asiatic Society, Calcutta





of the unenlightened, and he cites by way of retort the anthropomorphisms of the Old Testament and the human experiences of the Eternal Son. Does not the New Testament tell us, he asks in effect, of one God begetting another, and of the former taking the shape of a Dove, the latter appearing as Man? Similar stories in their own religion Hindu philosophers regard as fictions meant only "to engage the minds of persons of weak understanding." But the missionaries insist that the incarnations in Dove and Man are real. A reply in the *Friend of India*, No. 38,<sup>12</sup> led to a vigorous rejoinder in the third number of the *Brahmanical Magazine*. Rammohun here directs his attack on the doctrine of Trinity. He discards Trinity in Unity as an inconceivable idea, and charging Trinitarians with Tritheism he pronounces them polytheists. In answer to aspersions on Hindu morals, he suggests that the domestic life of Europeans might not compare favourably with that of Hindus. He concludes with a pious dignity which admirably contrasts with the tone of his opponent. The Editor had had the impious effrontery to declare that Hinduism evidently owed its origin to the Father of Lies alone. "Śivaprasad Śarma" makes answer, "We must recollect that we have engaged in solemn religious controversy and not in retorting abuse against each other."

In these pseudonymous articles, Rammohun writes, it will be observed, as a devout and aggrieved adherent of Hinduism. His preface to the first number of the *Magazine* makes complaint

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12. See Note I at the end of Chapter.—Editors.



of Christian missions in India as constituting a departure from the promise of the British authorities not to interfere with the religion of their subjects and as taking an undue advantage of the fact that Christianity is the religion of the conqueror. He suggests, in effect, that "the superiority of the Christian religion" should not be advocated "by means of abuse and insult, or by affording the hope of worldly gain," but "by force of argument alone." His protest against the religious insolence which proclaimed the whole of the wonderful development of Indian faith, from the Rig Veda down to Rammohun Roy himself, as solely of Satanic origin, was timely and well-deserved ; and his hostility to Christianity as then instituted in India was quite compatible with his previously expressed reverence for its Founder and for his real religion.

It is refreshing to turn for a moment from these theological wranglings to get a glimpse of Rammohun's cosmopolitan sympathies in the political sphere. When the intelligence reached India that the people of Naples after extorting a Constitution from their despotic King were crushed back into servitude by the Austrian troops, in obedience to the joint mandate of the crowned heads of Russia, Prussia, Austria, Sardinia and Naples, Rammohun felt it keenly. In a letter to Mr. Buckingham, of date August 11, 1821, he declares himself much "depressed by the late news from Europe." "From the late unhappy news" he goes on,

I am obliged to conclude that I shall not live to see liberty universally restored to the nations of Europe, and

Asiatic nations, especially those that are European Colonies, possessed of a greater degree of the same blessing than what they now enjoy.

Under these circumstances I consider the cause of the Neapolitans as my own, and their enemies as ours. Enemies to liberty and friends of despotism have never been, and never will be ultimately successful.<sup>13</sup>

These noble words reveal how profoundly Rammohun felt with the late Russell Lowell that "In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal claim"; and that

Wherever wrong is done  
To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath the all-beholding Sun  
That wrong is also done to us.

In September, 1821, the Calcutta Unitarian Committee was originated. \*

It was composed of a few native gentlemen among whom Rammohun was leader, and several Europeans, civilians and others, including Mr. Adam, whose conversion had just been announced.

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13. There are also other notable instances of Rammohun's sympathies having been openly declared in favour of popular revolts against tyranny in different parts of the world. See Note II. at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*

\* "The Committee was formed in September, 1821," says Mr. William Adam in a letter under date of June 26, 1827, to Mr. R. Dutton, "and its present members are Theodore Dickens, a barrister of the Supreme Court, George James Gordon, a merchant of the firm of Mackintosh & Co., William Tate, an attorney, B. W. Macleod, a surgeon in the Company's service, Norman Kerr, an uncovenanted servant of the Company, Rammohun Roy, Dwarkanath Thakoor, Prusunnu Coomar Thakoor, Radhaprusad Roy, and myself." It will be observed that nearly all the European names are Scottish.



"Proselytism," Mr. Adam explains, "is not our immediate object. We aim to remove ignorance and superstition, and to furnish information respecting the evidences, the duties, and the doctrines of the religion of Christ." The methods chosen were "education, rational discussion, and the publication of books both in English and in the native languages."† In January, 1822, Mr. Adam writes that he has with the assistance of a few friends rented a house in which Christian worship is regularly conducted.<sup>14</sup> "Rammohun Roy is one of the warmest of our supporters." As we shall see presently, the Anglo-Hindu school, commenced under the auspices of this Committee, was almost exclusively supported by Rammohun. The "Unitarian Press" was entirely his property. Mr. Adam, in his new *role* of Unitarian minister, seems to have depended for his financial support chiefly on Rammohun's bounty. So that the whole organization was principally in Rammohun's hands. We may regard the formation of this Unitarian Committee as a distinct and an important stage in his career as founder.

This avowed and organized connection with Unitarian Christianity led Rammohun into correspondence with several of its votaries in England

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† Adam's letter to R. Dutton, June 26, 1827.

14, It is interesting to note that a few years before the formation of the Calcutta Unitarian Committee, a small body of Unitarian Christians had grown up near Madras in South India mainly due to the exertions of William Roberts, an Indian convert to Unitarian Christianity. See Note III at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors*.

and America. On October 27, 1822, we find him writing to "a gentleman of Baltimore,"

I have now every reason to hope that the truths of Christianity will not be much longer kept hidden under the veil of heathen doctrines and practices, gradually introduced among the followers of Christ, since many lovers of truth are zealously engaged in rendering the religion of Jesus free from corruptions.....

It is.....a great satisfaction to my conscience to find that the doctrines inculcated by Jesus and his Apostles are quite different from those human inventions which the missionaries are persuaded to profess, and entirely consistent with reason and the revelation delivered by Moses and the prophets. I am, therefore, anxious to support them, even at the risk of my own life. I rely much on the force of truth, which will, I am sure, ultimately prevail. Our number is comparatively small, but I am glad to inform you that none of them can be justly charged with the want of zeal and prudence.

I wish to add, in order that you may set me right, if you find me mistaken,—my view of Christianity is that in representing all mankind as the children of one eternal Father, it enjoins them to love one another, without making any distinction of country, caste, colour, or creed ; notwithstanding they may be justified in the sight of the Creator in manifesting their respect towards each other, according to the propriety of their actions and the reasonableness of their religious opinions and differences.

Writing to the same gentleman a few months later,—on December 9, 1822,—he declares,

Although our adversaries are both numerous and zealous, as the adversaries of truth always have been, yet our prospects are by no means discouraging, if we only have the means of following up what has already been done.

We confidently hope that, through these various means, the period will be accelerated, when the belief in the Divine Unity and in the mission of Christ will universally prevail.



These avowals, of readiness to support the doctrines of Christ even at the risk of his life, and of hope in the ultimate universality of faith in the mission of Christ, naturally led to the impression that Rammohun was to all intents and purposes a Unitarian Christian.

Despite his hopefulness of its eventual success, the Unitarian movement seems to have very speedily received a decided rebuff. For, six months later,—July 2, 1823,—Rammohun writes to Mr. Samuel Smith, “From the disappointment which we have met in our endeavour to promote the cause of Unitarianism, I scarcely entertain any hope of success.” On the 4th of August following, Mr. Buckingham writes of Rammohun’s exertions, “He has done all this to the great detriment of his private interests, being rewarded by the coldness and jealousy of all the great functionaries of Church and State in India, and supporting the Unitarian Chapel, the Unitarian Press, and the expense of his own publications . . . out of a private fortune of which he devotes more than one-third to acts of the purest philanthropy and benevolence.”

His controversy with the missionaries was kindled afresh in the quarterly *Friend of India* which appeared in December,<sup>15</sup> 1821. The editor, Rev. Dr. Marshman, devoted 128 closely printed pages to an attempted refutation of Rammohun’s *Second Appeal to the Christian Public*. His arguments

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15. Dr. Marshman’s critical review here referred to, actually appeared in the quarterly issue of the *Friend of India* of June, 1821. See Note I at the end of the Chapter.

are directed to the defence of the old Evangelical doctrines of the Atonement and of the Deity of Christ with the consequent doctrine of Trinity. He lays the whole of the Scriptures, Old as well as New Testament, under contribution for proof texts of those dogmas, with a disregard of the laws of historical exegesis which even to the orthodoxy of to-day is bewildering. Dogmas which did not actually emerge until, at the earliest, in the beginning of the Christian era, are proved by passages in the Pentateuch, in the Psalms and in the Prophets. One example may suffice: "In Psalm xlv.," avers the learned Editor, "we have the Eternal Deity of the Son fully revealed." Evangelical religion has its answer to Rammohun's objections, but its exponents in India were not then aware how much must be conceded to the modern critical spirit before that answer can be effectively made. But Dr. Marshman sinned against higher than merely critical canons. Because the reverent Hindu impugns the validity of the Baptist's conception of the Supreme Being whom they both adore, Dr. Marshman accuses him of "arraigning his Maker of gross injustice", and of "charging Him with having founded all the religion of the patriarchs and prophets, of the apostles and primitive saints, of the blessed in Heaven throughout eternity, on an act of palpable iniquity." And of this Hindu Theist he dares to ejaculate, "May his eyes be opened ere it be for ever too late!"

On the 30th of January, 1823, Rammohun issued his rejoinder. The *Final Appeal to the Christian Public in Defence of the Precepts of Jesus* is a voluminous document. His four pages of mild



and inoffensive preface to *The Precepts of Jesus* had evoked such extensive criticism as to draw from him a first "Appeal in Defence" of 20 pages, a "Second Appeal" of 150 pages, and now a "Third and Final Appeal" of 256 octavo pages.\*

The last work bears evidence of the unfortunate change of attitude into which the missionaries suffered themselves to be betrayed by the progress of this polemic. It announces that while all the previous works of the author on the subject of Christianity had been printed at the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, the acting proprietor had, after the Second Appeal appeared, declined—"although in the politest manner possible"—to print any other production of Rammohun on the same subject. Rammohun was therefore obliged to purchase his own type and to rely on native superintendence. The title page declares the work "Printed at the Unitarian Press, Dhurmtollah, Calcutta."† "I am well aware," says Rammohun in his preface, "that this difference of sentiment has already occasioned much coolness towards me in the demeanour of some whose friendship I hold very dear." But his devotion to the truth of Monotheism which he held to be not less imperilled by Christian Trinitarianism than by Hindu poly-

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\* As reprinted in Rammohun's *English Works* edited by Jogendra Chandra Ghosh, Vol. II, Aruna Press, Calcutta, 1887.

† "There is a Unitarian press, also the property of Rammohun Roy, at which several pamphlets and tracts have been and continue to be printed, almost all bearing on the Unitarian controversy or tending to promote philanthropic objects." Letter of Mr. William Adam, July 27, 1816.

theism, left him no option but to pursue the controversy.

The "Final Appeal" controverts Dr. Marshman's arguments and Scriptural "proofs" step by step ; first as dealing with the Atonement, and next with the Trinity. Into the windings of this devious disputation we need not wander. Suffice it to say that, while the methods of exposition of the Hindu are more modern than those of his Christian opponent, many of his exegetical expedients are more apt to amuse than to convince a theologian of the present day. Yet the acquaintance which he shows with Hebrew and Greek and with expository literature is, considering his antecedents, little less than marvellous. It is interesting to observe that he rebuts Dr. Marshman's appeal to the authority of interpretative tradition by a reminder of the position of the first Protestants in face of the unbroken Catholic tradition ; and the charge of imputing iniquity to his Maker he courteously and even with a sense of pain retorts upon his critic. It is also interesting to place beside his anonymous or pseudonymous defence of Hinduism, this question which appears in the preface above his own proper signature :—

Could Hinduism continue after the present generation, or bear the studious examination of a single year, if the belief of their idols being endued with animation were not carefully impressed on the young before they come to years of understanding ?<sup>16</sup>

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16. This is obviously a reference to the current idolatrous Hinduism of Rammohun's time and *not to the pure philosophical Hinduism of the Vedānta* for which he cherished deep and abiding respect.—*Editors.*



His objection to Dr. Marshman “condemning those whose sentiments as to the person of Jesus Christ are precisely the same” as Newton’s and Locke’s, is significant, for he goes on to describe these “sentiments”—which we may perhaps infer that he himself holds<sup>17</sup>—thus, “that He is the anointed Lord and King promised and sent from God” and “is worthy of worship for his mediation and meritorious death, but by no means . . . perfect God and perfect Man.”

Not content with his bulky “Final Appeal,” Rammohun proposed in the preface to start in the following April a monthly magazine “to be devoted to Biblical criticism and to subject Unitarian as well as Trinitarian doctrines to the test of fair argument.” “If any one of the missionary gentlemen, for himself and in behalf of his fellow-labourers,” would send an essay in defence of their distinctive tenets, Rammohun would publish the same at his own expense. This proffer led to a curious controversy. A certain fiery doctor of medicine, R. Tytler by name, considered it “a general challenge to all Christians who profess a belief in the divinity of Christ,” and accordingly he offered to meet Rammohun in either public or private disputation. Rammohun replied pointing out that what he had

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17. Rammohun certainly had great admiration and respect for Christ whom he regarded as a divinely inspired religious teacher. It would however be *a definite mistake* to suppose that he *himself* ever thought Christ to be “the anointed Lord and King...worthy of worship...” He had as much abhorrence for man-worship in any form, as he had for idolatry.—*Editors.*

asked for was literary discussion, and declaring his willingness to examine any arguments which Dr. Tytler might commit to writing on behalf of the doctrine of Trinity, provided they were sent "by a missionary gentleman under his signature." The sagacious Hindu was not going to be drawn from his quest after sober and temperate theological controversy by the truculent polemic of an irresponsible layman. The layman thereupon writes to the Bengal *Hurkaru*, April 30, 1823, in a towering passion, charging this Unitarian Goliath with shrinking from the conflict to which he had challenged the hosts of Israel, so soon as the first layman appeared against him. He is especially indignant at the idea of his being required to secure the warrant of a missionary's signature to his lucubrations, as if *he* were going to turn Anabaptist. Whence it appears that the irate doctor did not love the Baptist persuasion. Rammohun Roy replied under date May 1st, quoting the precise words of his challenge and indicating the doctor's non-compliance with the specified terms. To a more courteous proffer of literary battle from an anonymous correspondent, Rammohun, on May 3rd, answered, reasonably enough, that he did not engage to encounter all professors of the Trinity "of whatever rank or situation, character or peculiar state of mind," but with accredited theologians only.

But for dealing with amateur theologians of the minatory order, he had methods of his own. He would answer a fool according to his folly. In the *Hurkaru* of May 3rd Dr. Tytler explodes with indignation at Rammohun's informing him of his entire



indifference whether a man professed belief as a Christian in the divinity of Christ or of "any other mortal man," or as a Hindu in the divinity of Thakur Trata Ram or Manu. The idea of putting Christian theology on a level with Hindu mythology drove the doctor into a frenzy of italics, capitals, large capitals and notes of exclamation. Rammohun adopted in reply an artifice as innocent in its transparency as it was pungent in its satire. He wrote under the assumed name of Ram Doss and under the assured profession of Hindu orthodoxy, to propose to Dr. Tytler a joint crusade against "the abominable notion of a single God" advocated by Rammohun Roy and others. He argues that Christian and Hindu orthodoxy rested on the common basis, the manifestation of God in the flesh, and drew a parallel between the incarnations of Ram and of Christ. Trinity in Unity on the one side and on the other the 330,000,000 of persons in the Hindu Godhead were equally matters of faith, inscrutable to reason. This covert satire stung the pugnacious doctor into styling Ram Doss "the wretched tool" of "the damnable heresy of Unitarianism" which was the same as Hindu idolatry and like it proceeded from the Devil. He signed this effusion characteristically "Your inveterate and determined foe in the Lord." Dr. Tytler's qualifications for controversy may be further seen in his assertion that "there is no book at present in possession of Hindus of higher antiquity than the entrance of the Mussulmans into India," and that "the histories of Buddha, Salavahana and Krishna comprise nothing more than perverted copies of Christianity."

The correspondence which went on for the most of the month of May was published in pamphlet form under the title : “*A Vindication of the Incarnation of Deity as the common basis of Hinduism and Christianity against the schismatic attacks of R. Tytler, Esq., M. D., by Ram Doss.*”

Possibly to the same time belongs *A Dialogue between a Missionary and Three Chinese Converts*, which is published in the *English Works* of the Rajah.<sup>18</sup> This little tract is written with the desire of making out that the impression produced on Chinese minds by the teaching of three Gods who are One God and One of whom died, is bewildering and ridiculous.

On November 15 in the same year appeared the fourth and last number of the *Brahmanical Magazine*. The cover of the pseudonym Śiva-prasad Śarmā is further kept up by an opening explanation that in default of reply from Ram-mohun Roy to the missionary attacks upon the Vedānta system this magazine had been published. This artifice of self-multiplication and self-concealment by aid of pseudonyms certainly savours more of the journalist than of the national religious reformer ; but, however we may explain it, Ram-mohun seems to have had quite a liking for such tactics. The *Magazine* is occupied first with a defence of the Vedāntic system and then with an onslaught on the doctrines of the Trinity and Atonement. The writer greatly enjoys himself in

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18. It was published in May, 1823. Its Bengali counterpart entitled *Pādri O Sishya Samibād* was also published about the same time.—*Editors.*



putting together ten different versions of the Trinity by English divines, from the Sabellian view of Dr. Wallis to the explanation of the newly-arrived Bishop Heber of Calcutta, that the second and third persons in the Trinity are simply the Angels Michael and Gabriel ! He suggests that so various and contradictory a creed is scarcely likely to make many converts. He concludes by laying down "for the information of the missionary gentlemen" "our religious creed," which we may probably regard as the faith of the real author :—

"In conformity with the precepts of our ancient religion, contained in the Holy Vedānt, though disregarded by the generality of the moderns, we look up to One Being as the animating and regulating principle of the whole collective body of the universe, and as the origin of all individual souls, which in a manner somewhat similar vivify and govern their particular bodies ; and we reject idolatry in every form and under whatsoever veil of sophistry it may be practised, either in adoration of an artificial, a natural, or an imaginary object. The divine homage which we offer consists solely in the practice of *Dayā*, or benevolence towards each other, and not in a fanciful faith, or in certain motions of the feet, arms, head, tongue, or other bodily organs, in a pulpit or before a temple."

In 1823, and possibly as a sort of practical conclusion to the course of controversy, Ram-mohun issued a short tract entitled *Humble Suggestions to his countrymen who believe in the One True God*. It is stated to be "by Prasanna Koomar Thakoor." As his editor, Jogendra Chandra Ghosh, remarks at this point, "The Raja was fond of writing anonymously and giving the names of others to his own works." This "advertisement" is prefixed :

My object in publishing this tract is to recommend those to whom it is addressed, to avoid using harsh or abusive language in their intercourse with European missionaries, either respecting them or their objects of worship, however much this may be countenanced by the example of some of these gentlemen:<sup>19</sup>

This is the tract :—

Those who firmly believe on the authority of the Vedas that “God is ONE only, without an equal,” and that “He cannot be known either through the medium of language, thought or vision : how can he be known except as existing, *the origin and support of the Universe ?*”—and who endeavour to regulate their conduct by the following precept, “He who is desirous of eternal happiness should regard another as he regards himself, and the happiness and misery of another as his own,” ought to manifest the warmest affection towards such of their countrymen as maintain the same faith and practice, even although they have not all studied the Veds for themselves, but have professed a belief in God only through an acquaintance with their general design. Many among the ten classes of Sunnyasees, and all the followers of Gooroo Nanuk, of Dadoo, and Kubeer, as well as of Santa, &c, profess the religious sentiments above mentioned. It is our unquestionable

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19. The Christian Missionaries in those days were well-known for the harsh and abusive language they often used towards Indians, *particularly* towards the Hindus. A correspondent of the *Sambād-Kaumudī* writing on September 27, 1826, under the signature, ‘A Brahman’, brings to the notice of the Editor, one typical instance of such vulgar and offensive arrogance. The letter has been quoted in full in the *Calcutta Monthly Journal* for October 1826 (J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 30 pp. 72–73). In course of his controversy with the Baptist Missionaries of Serampore, even Rammohun himself had to register his sharp protest against Dr. Marshman’s impolite remark that Hinduism owed its origin to the Devil. See above, p. 129.—*Editors.*



duty invariably to treat them as brethren. No doubt should be entertained of their future salvation, merely because they receive instructions, and practise their sacred music in the Vernacular dialect. For Yajnavalkya, with a reference to those who cannot sing the hymns of the Veds, has said "The divine hymns, *Rik*, *Gatha*, *Panika* and *Dakshabihita* should be sung ; because by their constant use man attains supreme beatitude". "He who is skilled in playing on the lute (veena), who is intimately acquainted with the various tones and harmonies and who is able to beat time in music, will enter without difficulty upon the road of salvation." Again the Śiva Dharma as quoted by Raghoonandan, says, "He is reputed a Gooroo who according to the capacity of his disciple instructs him in Sanskrit whether pure or corrupt, in the current language of the country, or by any other means."

Amongst foreigners, those Europeans who believe God to be in every sense ONE, and worship HIM ALONE in Spirit, and who extend their benevolence to man as the highest service to God, should be regarded by us with affection, on the ground of the object of their worship being the same as ours. We should feel no reluctance to co operate with them in religious matters, merely because they consider Jesus Christ as the Messenger of God and their spiritual teacher ; for oneness in the object of worship and sameness of religious practice should produce attachment between the worshippers.

Amongst Europeans, those who believe Jesus Christ to be God himself, and conceive him to be possessed of a particular form and maintain Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to be one God, should not be treated in an unfriendly manner. On the contrary, we should act towards them in the same manner as we act towards those of our countrymen who without forming any external image meditate upon Ram and other supposed incarnations and believe in their unity.

Again, those amongst Europeans who believing Jesus Christ to be the Supreme Being, moreover construct various images of him, should not be hated. On the contrary, it becomes us to act towards those Europeans in the same manner as we act towards such as believe Ram, &c., to be

incarnations of God and form external images of them. For, the religious principle of the two last mentioned sects of foreigners are one and the same with those of the two similar sects among Hindoos although they are clothed in a different garb.

When any belonging to the second and third classes of Europeans endeavour to make converts of us, the believers in the only living and true God, even then we should feel no resentment towards them, but rather compassion on account of their blindness to the errors into which they themselves have fallen. Since it is almost impossible, as every day's experience teaches us, for men when possessed of wealth and power, to perceive their own defects.<sup>20</sup>

So terminated Rammohun's polemic against the Trinitarian missionaries. But, even while that was in full course, he was involved in repelling attacks from an entirely opposite quarter. A defender of the conventional Hindu faith who styled himself an "Establisher of Religion," brought out a *brochure* in Bengali, entitled "Four Questions," which was manifestly levelled at the reformer and his associates.<sup>21</sup> From Rammohun's reply in the same language, which appeared in 1822 (20th of Magh, 1229, Bengali era), and which was entitled "Answers to Four Questions,"<sup>22</sup> we gather the chief points at issue between him and his orthodox fellow countrymen. The style of both combatants

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20. The Bengali version of the tract entitled *Prārthanā-patra* was published together with the English one, in 1823 --Editors.

21. The "Four Questions" (*Chāripṛaśna*) were printed in the Bengali weekly *Samāchār Darpan* (published by the Baptist Missionaries from Serampore) on April 6, 1822. —Editors.

22. *Chāripṛaśner Uttar* in Bengali.—Editors.



is indirect, allusive, sinuous ; with many covert personal references which are now scarcely intelligible, but all wrapped round the main point, which was—Had the reformers put themselves outside the pale of Hinduism ? The first question ran thus—

Do these professors of knowledge and their childish followers, having examined the mysteries of the Śāstras, wish to give up their own religion and adopt that of foreigners ? Is it proper, according to the Śāstras, for gentlemen to associate with such good-intentioned people ?

In other words, ought not Rammohun and his accomplices to be boycotted as renegades ? Rammohun retorts with a *tu quoque*. The “practiser of religion,” as he calls his pragmatic rite-observing opponent, failed just as much as “the inquirer into religion” to practise a millionth part of what the minute rules of Hinduism required. “The practiser,” with his father and grandfather had served men of an alien faith, had used Mahomedan tooth-powder and perfumes, had studied Mahomedan lore with Mahomedans, had instructed men of an alien faith in his own Śāstras. These things were as much violations of strict Hindu law as any ritual offence charged to “the inquirer.”

The second question inquires whether the religion of those who oppose native manners and customs, who ignorantly claim to know God, and who wear the Sacred Thread without affection, is not as the religion of the tiger and the cat ? Reply is made by enquiring whether “the establisher” observes the native customs of the Vaiṣṇavas, who eat no fish. Does he follow all the usages of his own sect ? If not, does he perform the requisite

penance ? An effective contrast is drawn between the man who outwardly appears to fulfil the strictest prescriptions of his religion, but at home, eats fish and abuses everyone ; and the man who makes no pretences but holds to the saying of Mahā Nirbān,<sup>23</sup> “the eternal religion consists in the knowledge of God and the performance of those practices most beneficial to man.”

The third question asks what religion sanctions the taking of life by a Brahman, and scornfully enquires as to the fate in this and in the next world of “merciful searchers into knowledge,” who daily cause kids to be killed for their table. The answer affirms that according to the Śāstras “it is not a sin to eat flesh that has been offered to Gods and to ancestors.” But if the eating of animal food incur the punishment of hell, does not the Establisher himself eat fish ?

The fourth question asks what must be done with “certain well-known persons” who “throw off fear of religion and of public opinion, cut their hair, drink wine and consort with infidels.”<sup>24</sup> It is answered that the Śāstras forbid only “*vain* cutting of the hair,” and enjoin the drinking of consecrated wine. Critics are significantly reminded that Brahmans who consort with the Mahomedan wives of their own servants and with Chandal courtezans ought properly to forfeit their Brahmanhood.

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23. The *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*, one of Rammohun's favourite Tāntrika texts.—*Editors*.

24. The English rendering of these passages from original Bengali has been regarded by some as incorrect and misleading. See Note IV at the end of the Chapter—*Editors*.



These pungent replies called forth a rejoinder of more than two hundred pages from "the Establisher of Religion."<sup>25</sup> This brought Rammohun again into the field. In 1823 (12th of Pous, 1230, Bengali era) he published his *Pathya Pradāna* ("Medicine for the Sick"). Its preface describes the last work of his opponent—whom he calls henceforth not the establisher but "the destroyer of religion"—as merely one long tirade of abuse. Rammohun declines to retaliate, remarking that in giving medicine to boys that are sick the physician does not lose his temper over their kicks and screams. The "Medicine" he administers is compounded from the Śāstras. In giving it, he rebuts false interpretations put upon his former answers.

The controversy was thus, it appears, analogous to that between the "tithing of mint and anise and cumin," and "the weightier matters of the law." Against the Rabbinism of the Hindu religion, Rammohun appealed to its Prophetism.

On the 16th of June in this year (1823), Rammohun who had emerged successfully from the proceedings instituted against him by his nephew some three years previously, was drawn once more into the law courts. The Rajah of Burdwan sued him for Rs. 15,002, being principal and interest on a bond for Rs. 7,501, which was given by Rammohun's father for arrears of land revenue, and which fell due so far back as 1797. Rammohun's

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25. Entitled *Pāshaṇḍa-Pīḍana*, or "A Torment to the Irreligious", and published from Calcutta on February 1, 1823. The author, Kashinath Tarkapanchānan was a contemporary orthodox *pandit*.—Editors.

defence was (1) that having been disinherited by his father he could not be held to have inherited his father's debts ; (2) that no demand for payment has been made during his father's life-time or since until now and (3) that a debt not claimed for twelve years ceased to be legally binding. He argued that the action was brought, out of malice, with a desire to ruin him, because Rammohun's son-in-law<sup>26</sup>, Dewan to the plaintiff's son lately deceased, had acted as vakeel for the widowed Ranees and extorted from the Rajah what was legally, though not customarily, their due. For this exacting vindication of the widows' rights, the Rajah naturally blamed Rammohun, and relying on his immense wealth was bent on breaking him. The proceedings now begun, lasted over more than eight years. Defeated in the Provincial Court of Calcutta, the Rajah appealed to the higher tribunal—the Sudder Dewanee Adalat—and the judicial decision which finally worsted him was not pronounced until Nov. 10, 1831<sup>27</sup>.

It is a remarkable commentary on the many-sidedness and elastic sympathy of Rammohun's character that just at the time when he was anonymously satirizing or loftily compassionating the propaganda of Trinitarian Christians, we find him

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26. For these cases, see Note V added to Chapter II above, pp. 51—52. Rammohun had no daughter and therefore no son-in-law. His *nephew* Gurudas Mukherji was the *dewan* of the late Maharaj Pratap Chand, son of the plaintiff and assisted the widowed Ranees as vakeel (Chanda and Majumdar. *Letters and Documents* p. 307)—*Editors*.

27. The final judgement was delivered on November 10, 1830.—*Editors*.



avowing attendance on a Presbyterian Church and giving his name and countenance to a petition for the despatch of Presbyterian missionaries to India. To Rammohun we may trace some share in the origination of Alexander Duff's great missionary work.\* Dr. Bryce, Church of Scotland Chaplain in Calcutta, declared himself disabused by Rammohun Roy of Abbé Dubois' opinion that no Hindu could be made a true Christian ; and, to quote Dr. Bryce's own words.

"Encouraged by the approbation of Rammohun I presented to the General Assembly of 1824 the petition and memorial which first directed the attention of the Church of Scotland to British India as a field for missionary exertions, on the plan that is now so successfully following out, and to which this eminently gifted scholar, himself a Brahmin of high caste, had specially annexed his sanction."

On the 8th December 1823—within less than a month of the appearance of the *Brahmanical Magazine*, No. IV—Rammohun added this written testimony to the minute of St. Andrew's Kirk Session on the proposal mentioned by Dr. Bryce :—

As I have the honour of being a member of the Congregation meeting in St. Andrew's Church (although not fully concurring in every article of the Westminster Confession of Faith), I feel happy to have an opportunity of expressing my opinion that, if the prayer of the memorial is complied with there is a fair and reasonable prospect of this measure proving conducive to the diffusion of religious and moral knowledge in India."

The parenthesis disclaiming *complete* concurrence with the Presbyterian creed, coming as it does

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\*For following incidents see Dr. George Smith's *Life of Alexander Duff*, Vol. 1, pp. 39, 40.

from "Ram Doss," seems to carry with it a flavour of fine irony ; but its mildness of statement was probably due only to the Rajah's exceeding urbanity. Rammohun's active assistance of Duff's earliest efforts will be noticed later. Scotsmen will doubtless regard it as a compliment to their national type of religion that while this cultured Theist was horrified by the overtures of the Anglican bishop and was antagonized by the Baptist editors, he was induced to beg for the presence in his country of Scottish Presbyterian missionaries.

But his sympathies most naturally lay with the suggestion which had been elicited, on his work becoming known in England and America, of starting a Unitarian propaganda in India. In 1823. Rev. Henry Ware, Unitarian minister of Harvard College, Cambridge, United States, addressed a number of questions to Rammohun on "The prospects of Christianity and the means of promoting its reception in India." Rammohun, in a letter dated February 2, 1824, explains that his delay in replying was due to his engrossing "controversies with polytheists both of the West and East." Before proceeding to answer *seriatim* the questions presented, he remarks :—

There is one question . . . (to wit "Whether it be desirable that the inhabitants of India should be converted to Christianity" . . . ) which I pause to answer, as I am led to believe, from reason, what is set forth in Scripture, that "In every nation he that *feareth* God and worketh *righteousness* is accepted with him " in whatever form of worship he may have been taught to glorify God. Nevertheless I presume to think that Christianity, if properly inculcated, has a greater tendency to improve the moral, social, and political state of mankind than any other known religious system.



He expresses his delight that so great a body of the American people "have engaged in purifying the religion of Christ from those absurd idolatrous doctrines and practices, with which the Greek, Roman, and Barbarian converts to Christianity have mingled it from time to time." Able friends of truth, he adds, have made similar efforts in England, but there they have against them the power and revenues of the Established Church. In America they had to fight "only prejudice unarmed with wealth or power." He concludes with a reference to the political future of the United States which reveals the wide outlook and sympathy of the man. He was writing shortly after the Missouri compromise (1821) had relaxed the first great tension between the "free" North and the slave-holding South ; and these are his words :—

I presume to say that no native of these States can be more fervent than myself in praying for the uninterrupted happiness of your country and for what I cannot but deem essential to its prosperity—the perpetual union of all the States under one general government.

He goes on to amplify his desire for the maintenance of Federal unity. He then deals with the string of questions propounded. On the number and quality of converts he speaks guardedly, but leaves the impression that there are no converts save a very few of low caste or none, ignorant, and influenced by mercenary motives. He quotes Abbé Dubois as a greater authority than himself, who said that it was impossible to convert a Hindu to Christianity. The chief causes assigned by him for the slow advance of Christianity in India are reliance of the natives on their sacred books, their early

prejudices, their dread of losing caste, and the fact that "the doctrines which the missionaries maintain and preach are less conformable with reason than those professed by Moosalmans and in several points are equally absurd with the popular Hindu creed." From this last drawback alone was the promulgation of Unitarian Christianity exempt. The sincere conversion of the few enlightened Hindus to Trinitarian Christianity is "morally impossible," but "they would not scruple to embrace or at least to encourage, the Unitarian system of Christianity, were it inculcated on them in an intelligible manner." To the question whether and if so how Unitarians could aid the cause of Christianity in India, Rammohun returns the reply.

Everyone who interests himself in behalf of his fellow creatures, would confidently anticipate the approaching triumph of true religion should philanthropy induce you and your friends to send to Bengal as many serious and able teachers of European learning and science and Christian morality unmingled with religious doctrines, as your circumstances may admit, to spread knowledge gratuitously among the native community, in connection with the Rev. Mr. Adam. . . .

Unitarian missionary schools giving instruction in the rudiments of a European education in the English language and in Christian morality, mingling with it very little instructions relative to the doctrines of Christianity, would, he held, be of great use,—“the only way,” in fact, “of improving their understanding and ultimately meliorating their hearts.” “I may be fully justified in saying that two-thirds of the native population of Bengal would be exceedingly glad to see their children educated in English learning.” “To the best of my knowledge,



no benefit has hitherto arisen from the translation of the Scriptures into the languages of the East, nor can any advantage be expected from the translations in circulation." To the question whether any important impression will ever be made "except by the conversion and through the influence of persons of education," Rammohun answers characteristically, "Christianity, when represented in its genuine sense in any language whatever, must make a strong impression on every intelligent mind, especially when introduced by persons of education and respectability." As the place most likely for successful propaganda he recommends Calcutta.

As a result of prospects thus advanced and of anticipated support from English-speaking lands, Mr. Adam, aided by Rammohun and the Unitarian Committee, proceeded to organize a Unitarian Mission in Calcutta. To its growing fund we find that Rammohun subscribed Rs. 5,000, Dwarkanath Thakoor Rs. 2,500, and Prasanna Coomar Thakoor Rs. 2,500. Writing on June 4th, 1824, to Dr. T. Rees, of the Unitarian Committee in London, Rammohun reports :—

As to the state of the Unitarian Society in Calcutta, our Committee have not yet been able to purchase a suitable piece of ground for a chapel and school. They will, I hope, soon succeed in their endeavours. We have collected, partly by purchase and partly by gift, a great number of works and established a pretty respectable library in Calcutta.

From this letter we learn that Mr. Adam is now styled "the Unitarian Missionary in Bengal." Rammohun prefaces the report with expressions of lively delight that the London Unitarians had

reprinted his *Precepts of Jesus* and the two *Appeals* in its defence. He goes on naively to declare his grief and disappointment that George IV.,—whom he generously describes as “the most accomplished person of his time, of most enlightened acquirements and most liberal sentiments”—should not have used his royal influence to relieve the members of the Established Church from “the fetter” of the Thirty-nine Articles and from the repetition of the damnatory clauses of the “Athanasian Creed.”

It is interesting to note that six days after Bishop Heber arrived in Calcutta (he came October 10th, 1823, and wrote the letter on the 16th) he informs the Dean of St. Asaph, “Our chief hindrances are some Deistical Brahmins who have left their old religion and desire to found a sect of their own, and some of those who are professedly engaged in the same work with ourselves, the Dissenters”.<sup>28</sup>

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28. See Bishop Heber's *Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India from Calcutta to Bombay 1824-25* (Two-Volume Edition, John Murray London, 1828) Vol. II, pp. 302-03.—*Editors*.



## SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

### I

The following list of publications covers the entire field of controversy between Rammohun Roy and the Baptist Missionaries of Bengal :—

1820 : Rammohun Roy published the *Precepts of Jesus*,

1820 : The *Precepts of Jesus* was criticised in the *Friend of India* (Monthly Series) Vol, III No. 20 (February 1820), pp. 23—31. The criticism is divided into two parts, the actual review of the text by “A Christian Missionary” pp. 23—29 ; and some comments added to it by the editor, Dr. Joshua Marshman, pp. 29—31. The “Christian Missionary” who wrote the review, has been rightly identified by our author with Rev. Deocar Schmidt. (See above p. 115.) This point is clearly established by the the open letter of Rev. William Adam to Rev. William Yates, one of the Calcutta Baptist Missionaries, originally published in the *Unitarian Repository and Christian Miscellany* for May, 1824, and quoted in the *India Gazette* May 17, 1824 ( J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 28, p. 59). The *Precepts of Jesus* was criticised once again in the *Friend of India* (Quarterly Series) Vol. I. No. 1 (September 1820) pp. 88—119. The reviewer this time was Dr. Marshman who had previously made the following announcement in course of his editorial remarks on Rev. Deocar Schmidt’s previous article (*Friend of India* Monthly Series, Vol. III. No. 20, pp. 30—31) : “...as it is impossible to do justice to the enquiry in our present Number, we intend to take up the subject more fully in the first Number of the Quarterly Series which we hope will appear in about two months.”

1820 : Rammohun published his *An Appeal to the Christian Public* as reply to the above criticisms.

- 1820 : The *Appeal* met with hostile criticism from Dr. Marshman in the *Friend of India* (Monthly Series) Vol. III. No. 23 (May 1820), pp. 133—39,
- 1821 : Rammohun published his *Second Appeal to the Christian Public* as reply to Dr. Marshman.
- 1821 : Dr. Marshman came out with a detailed criticism of the tract in the *Friend of India* (Quarterly Series) Vol. I, No. 4 (June 1821) pp. 501—628.
- 1823 : Rammohun published his *Final Appeal to the Christian Public* as reply to Dr. Marshman. The attitude of the Missionaries increasingly stiffened towards Rammohun as the latter went on with his searching examination of the Christian dogmas in a reverent at the same time non-sectarian spirit. The *Precepts* and the first two *Appeals* had been printed at the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta. The Missionaries now refused to print the *Final Appeal* in their own press. James Hoby in his *Memoir of William Yates of Calcutta* (London 1847) p. 167, has summed up the attitude of the Missionaries correctly : "...it was thought in some sort a sanction of error, for the missionaries to have allowed any of the printing for Rammohun Roy to be done at their press...". So Rammohun had to publish the *Final Appeal* from his own Unitarian Press at Dharmatala, Calcutta. As far as he was concerned this phase of the controversy was closed with the publication of the *Final Appeal*.

It should however be noted that Dr. Marshman continued to uphold the orthodox position even after the publication of the *Final Appeal*. He wrote two more articles,—one in the *Friend of India* (Quarterly Series) Vol. III. No. 9. pp. 89—186 against Rammohun's criticisms of the Doctrine of Atonement ; and another in the *Friend of India* (Quarterly Series) Vol. III. No. 11, pp. 393—592 ; against the latter's assault on the Doctrine of the Deity of Christ.

The above articles of Dr. Marshman seems to have made little impression on contemporary public opinion as it would appear from the following remark of the *India Gazette* May 17,



1824 regarding Baptist Missionary attack on Rammohun : "... we owe it to common sense and the cause of truth, to declare that...the attack on Rammohun...appears to us to have been about as injudicious and weak an effort of officious zeal as we ever heard of. The effect of that attack was to rouse up a most gigantic combatant in the Theological field—a combatant who, we are constrained to say has not met with his match here" (italics ours—Editors.) (J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 27, p. 72). Rammohun did not himself reply any further to Dr. Marshman. The original ground of the Missionary controversy with him were however elaborately discussed by Rev. William Adam who had in 1821 seceded from the Trinitarian fold, in the afore-said letter to Rev. William Yates, wrtten May 1824 (*Ibid* No. 28. pp. 56—70. ) His main contention in the letter is that Missionary attack on Rammohun had been absolutely uncalled for. It may be of some interest to us to learn what Dr. Marshman, Rammohun's orthodox opponent, had himself to say regarding his own part in the controversy. His son records : "In one of his letters during the controversy, he says, 'these are the only articles on divinity, I have ever written, and some may be apt to think me, from the 'Friend of India', more of a politician than a divine ; yet the study of divinity is my highest delight" (J. C. Marshman *Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward* London 1859, Vol. II p. 239).

Apart from its main theme, the controversy is also interesting for some of its side issues. The joint efforts of Rammohun Roy, Rev. William Adam, and Rev. William Yates to translate the four Gospels into Bengali had ended in the withdrawal of Mr. Yates and the conversion of Mr. Adam to Unitarianism ! Mr. Adam's secession was a hard blow to the Missionary camp as the following official notice would unmistakably indicate : "We mention with deep regret that Mr. William Adam,...has embraced opinions derogatory to the honour of the Saviour—denying the proper Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ ; in consequence of which the connexion between him and the Society has been dissolved" (*Periodical Accounts Relative to the Baptist Missionary Society, of 1822* London 1822, p. 8). It was at one time feared in Missionary

circles that Mr. Yates had also followed the example of Mr. Adam. A strong rumour to that effect became so wide-spread that even Dr. Carey was half-inclined to take it seriously. Mr. Yates had to come out hastily with an open disclaimer ! He later published his *Essays in defence of important Scripture doctrines in reply to the two Appeals...* which was printed at the Baptist Mission Press in 1822. This book which tried to maintain the orthodox viewpoint against Rammohun's attacks, contained twelve essays, five by Rev. T. Scott and the rest from the pen of Mr. Yates himself although published in the name of "the Baptist missionaries of Calcutta" (James Hoby *Memoir of William Yates of Calcutta*, London 1847, pp. 167-68). The publication of the "Essays" has been officially noticed in the *Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Missionary Society, for 1823* (London 1823), p. 15, but for some reason or other, the work was able to rouse very little curiosity in circles interested in the main controversy. As Mr. Adam points out in his previously mentioned letter of May, 1824, to Mr. Yates, "...during the whole period no public notice has been taken of them either by the advocates or opponents of reputed orthodoxy" (Majumdar *Op. cit.* p. 56). Rammohun does not even mention it in his *Final Appeal* published in 1823.

We should also not forget that Adam, Yates and Rammohun formed a group in order to translate the Gospels afresh into Bengali because the previous translations including that of Dr. Carey, were considered by them (specially by Rammohun), full of "the most flagrant violations of native idiom." (See above p. 122). Rammohun's particular contribution in this respect is thus acknowledged by Mr. Yates : "He is one of the most learned men in Sanskrit and Arabic in Calcutta ; and in the idioms of Bengalee, as that is his native tongue, he assists us much." The biographer of Yates adds . "He not only studied the Holy Scriptures diligently ; but in 1820. afforded Mr. Yates very effectual assistance in the translation of the Gospels into Bengalee. By his aid considerable improvements were made (both italics ours—Editors) (Hoby *Memoir of William Yates* p. 166). This is a point for students of Bengali literature to note.



The anonymous challenge that opened the second line of dispute by ultimately giving birth to the *Brahmanical Magazine* (with its Bengali counterpart *Brāhmaṇa Sevadhi*), appeared in the *Samāchār Darpan* No. 165 (July 14, 1821) pp. 3-4. The letter and the editorial note inviting replies, have been quoted in full in the first two numbers of the *Brāhmaṇa Sevadhi* (Rammohun's *Collected Bengali Works*—5. Sāhitya Parishad Ed. pp. 5—6, 13—14) and English translations of these have been prefixed serially to the first two numbers of the *Brahmanical Magazine* (*English works of Raja Rammohun Roy* edited by Kalidas Nag and Debajyoti Burman Part II Calcutta 1946. pp. 141—43, 151—52).

The letters and the editorial note induced Rammohun to send his reply to the *Samāchār Darpan* under the signature of “Śivaprasad Śārmā”, but the Editor refused to publish it on the following plea, inserted in the issue of September 1, 1821 : “শ্রীযুত শিবপ্রসাদ শর্মা প্রেরিত পত্র এখানে পঁহুঁছিয়াছে তাহা না ছাপাইবার কারণ এই যে সে পত্রে পূর্বপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত ব্যতিরিক্ত অনেক অজিজ্ঞাসিতাভিধান আছে । কিন্তু অজিজ্ঞাসিতাভিধান দোষ বহিস্কৃত করিয়া কেবল ষড়দর্শনের দোষোদ্ধার পত্র ছাপাইতে অহুমতি দেন তবে ছাপাইতে বাধা নাই, অতথা সর্বসম্মত অতত্র ছাপাইতে বাসনা করেন তাহাতেও হানি নাই ।” (See *Samibādpatre Sekāler Kathā* edited by Brajendranath Banerji vol. I, 3rd ed. p. 326.) The so-called “irrelevant issues” (অজিজ্ঞাসিতাভিধান) in the body of the reply, consisted of Rammohun's strictures on some of the dogmas of Trinitarian Christianity which he had sought to compare with the conclusions of Hindu religious philosophy while defending the latter.

The refusal of the Editor of the *Samāchār Darpan* to publish the reply induced Rammohun to bring out the first two numbers of the *Brāhmaṇa Sevadhi* in Bengali and the *Brahmanical Magazine* in English in 1821.

The Baptist Missionaries came out with a scathing attack on the publications in the *Friend of India* (Monthly Series) Vol. IV, No. 38, (August 1821) pp. 243—57. Rammohun replied by publishing the third number of the series in English and Bengali as before, in the same year (1821).

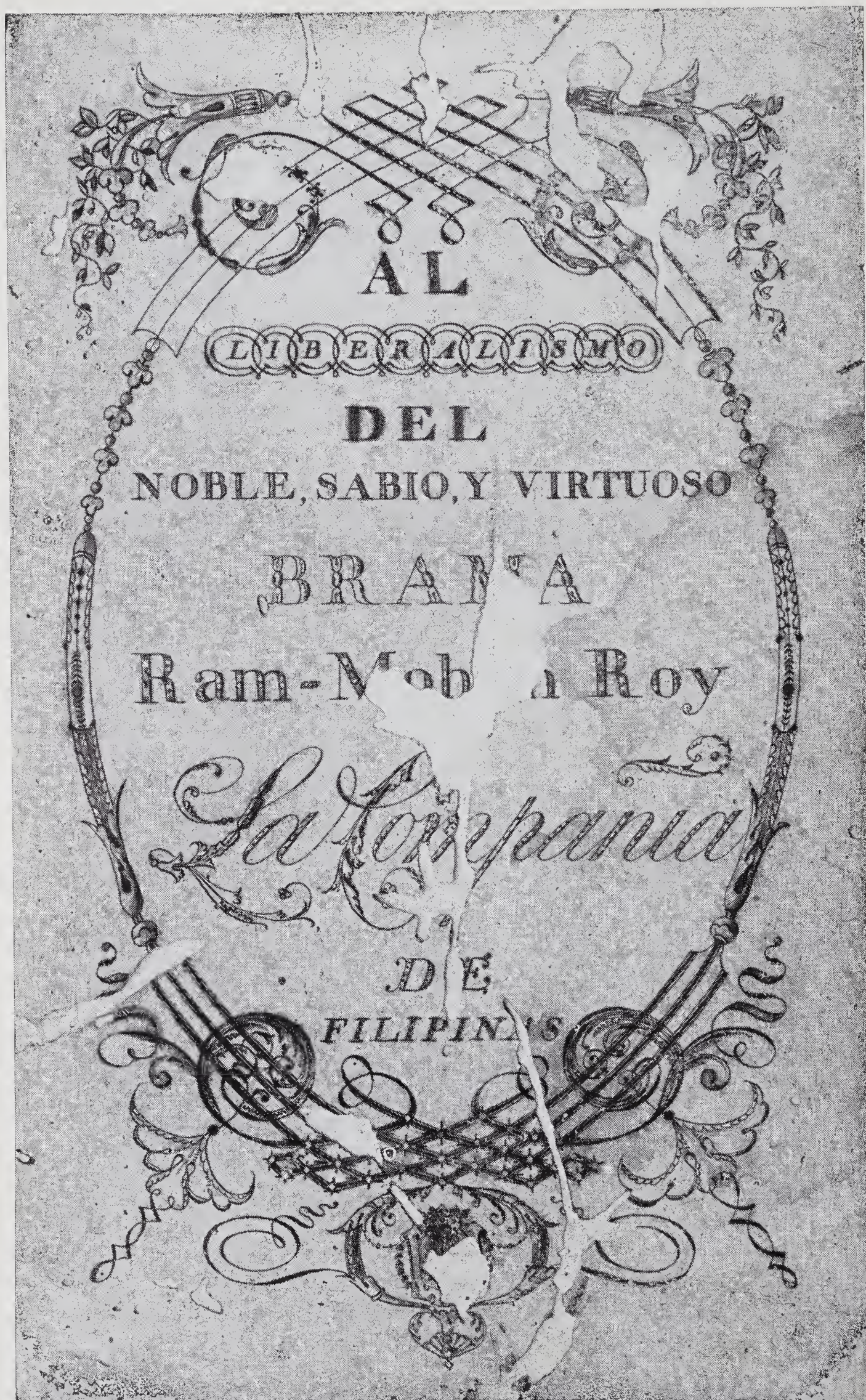




VI a Title-page of the Spanish Constitution of 1812  
dedicated to Rammohun Roy

Block lent by the Prabasi, Calcutta





VI b Dedication page of the Spanish Constitution of 1812

Block lent by the Prabasi, Calcutta



A rather patronising notice of Rammohun's above periodicals appeared next year in the *Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Missionary Society for 1822*, p. 9, accusing its author no doubt of "much ignorance of the gospel" and dubbing the Magazines as "abounding in misrepresentations of the motives of those whom they attack," but at the same time hailing its appearance in the hope that "it will probably help to cherish that spirit of enquiry and investigation, which has been hitherto so foreign to the Hindu character." Rammohun's appeal to the Missionaries to use sober and moderate expressions in religious controversy, in the concluding paragraph of the third number of the Magazine, seems however to have been in vain. From the preface and the first paragraph of the fourth number of the Magazine we come to know that the Missionaries had once again brought out a Bengali tract from the Baptist Mission Press, Serampore, condemning the "Vedānta system of religion" in harsh language. Rammohun in reply issued the fourth and the last number of the *Brahmanical Magazine* in 1823. This was published only in English. The second chapter of the controversy closes with the appearance of this work.<sup>29</sup>

## II

Rammohun's "cosmopolitan sympathies" in the political sphere is further illustrated by the joyous enthusiasm with which he had welcomed the news of the liberation of the Spanish colonies of South America from the tyranny of Spain. He celebrated the occasion by entertaining a number of his European friends at a dinner party at his Calcutta residence.

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29. The Editors here beg to acknowledge the courtesy of the Serampore College authorities who kindly gave them all facilities to consult relevant documents connected with the famous controversy between Rammohun and the Baptist Missionaries, preserved in the College library. Among modern biographers of Rammohun Prof. Upendranath Ball has given a connected account of the controversy in his *Rammohun Roy : A Study of His Life, Works and Thoughts* (U. Roy & Sons, Calcutta 1933) pp. 105—43.



An account of the party appeared in the *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* for September 1823, pp. 350—57, under the title “Rammohun Roy”, from which we quote the following extract (pp. 351—52): “But the lively interest he took in the progress of South American emancipation, eminently marks the greatness and benevolence of his mind, and was created, he said, by the perusal of the detestable barbarities inflicted by Spain to subjugate and afterwards continued by the Inquisition to retain in bondage that unhappy country. ‘What!’ replied he, (upon being asked why he had celebrated by illuminations, by an elegant dinner to about sixty Europeans and by a speech composed and delivered by himself, at his house in Calcutta,—the arrival of important news of the success of the Spanish Patriots), ‘What! ought I to be insensible to the sufferings of my fellow-creatures wherever they are, or howsoever unconnected by interests, religion and language?’”<sup>30</sup>

In the internal struggles of Spain, Rammohun’s sympathies were definitely on the side of the liberals. A copy of the famous Spanish Constitution declared at Cadiz in 1812, published by the Philipine Company (in Spanish) and dedicated to the *liberalissimo* (most liberal), *noble*, *sabio* (wise) and *virtuoso* (virtuous) *Bramo* (Brāhmana), Rammohun Roy, has recently come to light. (See Plate VI for the facsimile of its title-page.) The fact and also the language of the dedication of this remarkable document which in the words of Benedetto Croce, marked “the beginning of the formation of a new Spanish people”, to Rammohun Roy, certainly point to the conclusion that in the latter the Spanish progressives had a staunch admirer and supporter of their cause in the East.

In a letter to Mr. Woodford dated August 22, 1833, Rammohun is found to express his sense of gratification apparently at the victory of the liberal party in the Portuguese Civil War: “The news from Portugal is highly gratifying”, he writes, “though another struggle is still expected” (*The English Works of*

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30. The Editors are grateful to Dr. Arabinda Mitra for having kindly verified the reference to the relevant number of the *Edinburgh Magazine* from the Edinburgh Public Library.

*Raja Rammohun Roy* edited by Kalidas Nag and Debajyoti Burman, Part IV p. 93). The indirect reference is to the struggle then going on in Portugal, between Dom Miguel, the champion of absolutism and Maria da Gloria, supported by the constitutionalists.

Rammohun was also a champion of Catholic Emancipation and the author mentions in chapter V below, how as early as in 1822, he had sharply criticised in his Persian weekly *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*, the narrow and high-handed policy pursued by the British Government towards the Irish Catholics. In some of his letters also he is seen to advocate the cause of Catholic Emancipation in strong and unambiguous language (cf. *English Works* ed. by Nag and Burman, IV p. 94).

Finally we may here make a passing reference to his great admiration for the ideals of the French Revolution as well as to the enthusiastic support he gave to the Reform Agitation in England. Detailed notices of these have been taken by the author (or to be fair, by the continuator) in chapter VIII below.

### III

William Roberts, the South Indian Unitarian convert was in his own words "a native of Carnatick [Karnatak], a descendant of Tamul or Malabar heathen parents of very indigent circumstances..... ." He was converted to Christianity, got gradually dissatisfied with Trinitarianism and ultimately embraced the Unitarian faith. Chiefly due to his exertions a small Unitarian Congregation consisting of about ten families besides a number of individuals "most of whom are converts from heathenism and all of them persons from very inferior stations of life," had been formed and a small place of worship opened at a short distance from Madras, on the 19th December 1813. Roberts himself visited England more than once, acquired a good knowledge of English and was in regular correspondence with the Unitarian Society of London. From time to time, the latter body used to publish his letters in the form of small tracts. The National Library, Calcutta, possesses three such publications bound in one volume. It contains :



(i) A Letter to the Unitarian Society of London from William Roberts, dated Madras, December 25, 1816. (Published by the Unitarian Society, London, 1818.)

(ii) A Letter from William Roberts to the Rev. Thomas Belsham, dated June 17, 1818 (Published by the Unitarian Society, London, 1819).

(iii) Letters from William Roberts to Dr. Thomas Rees, Secretary to the London Unitarian Society and to the Rev. Thomas Belsham (Published by the Unitarian Society, London, 1820). This tract contains three letters : one to Dr. Rees, dated April 20, 1819 ; and two to Rev. Belsham dated August 26, 1819, and September 23, 1819, respectively.

It is not definitely known whether the organisers of the Calcutta Unitarian Committee had any contact with the members of the said South Indian Unitarian Congregation. We can however consider it most likely that the two groups had heard of each other at least through the medium of the Unitarian Society of London, with which both were in touch. Rammohun is known also to have corresponded with Dr. Rees and Rev. Thomas Belsham. (For the text of one of his letters to the former, see *English Works* ed. by Nag and Burman, IV pp. 87—88 ; for his letter to Rev. Belsham, *Ibid.* pp. 111—12.) In his letter to Rev. Belsham (date unknown, year 1821 ?) he mentions one Mr. Roberts “who is about to leave India for England,” and who “has kindly offered to take charge of any letter or parcel that I might wish to send to Europe.” It is not possible to be definite whether this “Mr. Roberts” is identical with William Roberts, the South Indian Unitarian convert. If however, Mr. Roberts mentioned in Rammohun's letter to Rev. Belsham is regarded as the same person as ‘Mr. R.’ mentioned in his letter to Dr. Rees, he cannot probably have been William Roberts of South India. For “Mr. R.” is definitely described in Rammohun's letter as “a member of the firm of M. & Co. of this place” i.e. Calcutta, and is mentioned as having left for Europe *from Bengal*. The dates of the two letters however do not appear to tally, that to Dr. Rees being timed Calcutta June, 4, 1824, while the one to Rev. Belsham having been written sometime in 1821. If the year of the

writing of the letter to Rev. Belsham, as mentioned by Messrs. Nag and Burman, is correct it would be difficult to uphold the identity of "Mr. Roberts" and "Mr R." as well ! In his letter to Rev. Henry Ware of Cambridge (U. S. A) "on the prospects of Christianity" in India, dated February 2, 1824, Rammohun mentions that he paid a visit to Vellore and Madras in South India "four years ago" i.e. sometime in 1820. (*The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, ed. by Nag and Burman, Part IV p. 46). Did he have any contact with William Roberts' group of Unitarians during his stay in South India ? It is really surprising that he does not refer to them in his letter to Rev. Ware.

It should be carefully noted that the members of the South Indian Unitarian Congregation and the Indian supporters of the Calcutta Unitarian Committee differed in important respects. First, the former usually came from the poorer and often uneducated classes of Indians and even William Roberts in spite of his excellent knowledge of the English language, had no pretension to learning. The Calcutta group however consisted invariably of high-caste Hindus well-known for their wealth, and social position and sometimes as in the case of Rammohun, distinguished for scholarship. Secondly, the former were all regular converts to Unitarian Christianity ; whereas Rammohun and his Indian associates in the Calcutta Unitarian Committee, though warm supporters of the Unitarian cause, were resolutely opposed to any idea of conversion. They remained throughout the period of their association with the Committee, good Hindus. Rammohun makes his position clear in his tract *Humble Suggestions*, where he says with regard to the Unitarians : "We should feel no reluctance to co-operate with them in religious matters, merely because they consider Jesus Christ as the Messenger of God and their Spiritual Teacher ; for oneness in the object of worship and sameness of religious practice should produce attachment between the worshippers." (See above p. 144.) In another tract, *Answer of a Hindoo to the question : why do you frequent a Unitarian Place of Worship* he says : "Because Unitarians believe, profess and inculcate the doctrine of divine unity—a doctrine which I find firmly



maintained both by Christian Scriptures and by our most ancient writings commonly called the Vedas.” (*The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* ed. by Nag and Burman. Part II p. 194). To Rev. Henry Ware’s question “Whether if it be desirable that the inhabitants of India should be converted to Christianity”, Rammohun had written back “In every nation he that *feareth* God and worketh *righteousness* is accepted with him *in whatever form of worship he may have been taught to glorify God*” (third italics ours—Editors). (See above p. 151.) He is here found *definitely not* to favour the idea of Indians being converted to any form of Christianity.

## VI

Nagendranath Chatterjee (*Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rāyer Jiban-Charit* 5th Ed. p. 229 note) accuses Miss Collet of giving an incorrect summary of the contents of the *Four Questions* (*Chāripṛaśna*) as well as those of the *Answer to the Four Questions* (*Chripṛaśner Uttar*) for which he makes her imperfect acquaintance with Bengali, responsible. While it may be conceded that the summaries and the English renderings of the texts as inserted in Chapter IV, are sometimes a little too free, the extract which he quotes as an example, cannot be found in the context mentioned, in the Sahitya Parishad Edition of Rammohun’s *Collected Bengali Works*. The portion of the narrative we are discussing, though written by the continuator, was revised by Miss Collet. The reader would be well-advised to compare the English summary of the *Chāripṛaśna* and the *Charipṛāśner Uttar* as given in the text with the Bengali original, in the Sahitya Parishad Edition of Rammohun’s *Collected Bengali Works*—6. pp. 3—20.

## CHAPTER V

(1821—1826)

### JOURNALISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL PIONEER-WORK

1821. [ *Second Appeal to the Christian Public* in defence of *The Precepts of Jesus*]. [ *Brahmanical Magazine* I., II., III.] Dec. 4—Starts the *Sambād Kaumudi*.
1822. Baisakh. Starts the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*. About this time opens Anglo-Hindu School. Publishes *Brief Remarks on Ancient Female Rights*.
1823. Jan. 30—*Final Appeal to the Christian Public*. March. Memorial against the Government Press Regulations. Appeal to the King in Council on the same. [May—The Tytler Controversy]. [Nov. 15—*Brahmanical Magazine* IV.] Letter to Lord Amherst on English Education (*Humble Suggestions to his Countrymen who believe in one God*).
1824. [ *Prospects of Christianity*.] *Appeal* for famine-smitten natives in South Deccan.
1825. Different modes of Worship.
1826. Published *Bengali Grammar* in English. His son acquitted of a charge of embezzlement. About the earlier part of the year, built the *Vedānta College*.

It is characteristic of Rammohun's many-sided activity that during the period of his energetic and voluminous theological controversy, he was busily engaged in promoting native journalism and native education. His role was essentially that of the Enlightener ; his one aim in publishing treatises on Unitarian divinity, in founding schools and



colleges, and in conducting two newspapers was to enlighten the minds of his fellow-countrymen. He was certainly not the man to overlook the enormous value of the newspaper as an instrument for diffusing intellectual light. The relaxation in 1819 of the previously very stringent rules of press censorship enforced by the British Government was accepted by him as an invitation to the development of native journalism. The regulation requiring every newspaper before it was issued, to be submitted to a Government official was dispensed with. Lord Hastings, the then Governor-General contented himself with prohibiting animadversions on the actions of Government, discussions likely to create religious alarm among the natives, or otherwise to stir up dissension, relying for the rest on "the prudence and descretion of the editors".

In a copy of Mr. Buckingham's *Calcutta Journal* in the latter part of 1821 appeared the "prospectus of a Bengalee weekly newspaper to be conducted by natives, printed and circulated in Bengalee and English". It was to be called *Sambād Kāumudī* or "The Moon of Intelligence".<sup>1</sup> It was to deal with "religious, moral and political matters ; domestic occurrences ; foreign as well as local intelligence". The intimation of the price at which the new weekly was to be had is couched in terms of superabundant Oriental courtesy :—

To enable us to defray the expenses which will necessarily be attendant on an undertaking of this nature, we humbly solicit

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1. See in this connection J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India*, Nos. 168, and 173, pp. 284, 300—02.—*Editors*.

the support and patronage of all who feel themselves interested in the intellectual and moral improvement of our countrymen, and confidently hope that they will with their usual liberality and munificence, condescend to gratify our most anxious wishes, by contributing to our paper a monthly subscription of two rupees, in acknowledgment of which act of their benignity and encouragement, we pledge ourselves to make use of our utmost efforts and exertions to render our paper as useful, instructive and entertaining as it can possibly be.

The first number appeared December 4, 1821. Its "address to the Bengal public" announced "the public good" to be its "guiding star." It gratefully acknowledges Lord Hastings' action in removing the shackles from the Press. It promises to reprint in Persian, Hindustani and English such of its articles as seem to merit translation. It invokes the assistance of the Literati, and not the least significant promise of all—it offers to publish "respectful expression" of native grievances.

"A newspaper conducted exclusively by natives in the native language,' it describes itself as "a novelty at least if not a desideratum." We may regard it therefore as the parent, and Rammohun Roy as the founder, of native journalism in India.<sup>2</sup> Its consequent significance for the future of the Empire justifies the statement here of the contents of a few of its earlier numbers,

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2. In this connection mention must be made of the 'Vangal Gazette' which we have reason to regard as the *first newspaper published in the Bengali language*, under the management of persons belonging to the progressive group led by Rammohun Roy. See Note. I at the end of the Chapter—*Editors.*



No. I.—The Editor's address to the Bengali community.

An Appeal to the Government for the establishment of a School for the gratuitous instruction of the children of poor but respectable Hindus.

An account of a miser prince.

No. II.—An Address to the natives, enumerating the advantages of reading newspapers.

Letter proposing to raise a fund to water the Chitpore Road.

Account of implicit faith in a Guru and an extraordinary gift.

Letter suggesting 22 instead of 15 as the legal age for succeeding to hereditary property.

Satirical account of the lavish generosity at the funerals of certain rich natives, who when alive were notorious for niggardliness.

Humble address to the Government soliciting the extension of trial by jury to the Mofussil, Zilla and Provincial Courts of Judicature.

No. III.—An Appeal to the Government to relieve the Hindu community from the inconvenience consequent upon there being only one Ghaut for the burning of dead bodies ; whereas an immense space of ground has been granted for the burial of Christians.

Appeal to Government for the prevention of exportation of the greatest part of the produce of rice from Bengal to foreign ports.

Appeal to Government to enable the middle class of native subjects to avail themselves of the treatment of European physicians.

Appeal to the Calcutta magistrates to resort to rigorous measures for relieving the Hindu inhabitants of Calcutta from the serious grievance of Christian gentlemen driving their buggies amongst them and cutting and lashing them with whips, without distinction of sex or age, while they quietly assembled in immense numbers to see the images of their deities pass in the Chitpore Road, when many of them, through terror and consternation

caused by the lashing inflicted on the spectators, fell down into drains, while others were trampled under foot by the crowd.

This last heading gives a vivid glimpse of the way in which "Christian gentlemen" from Britain failed to make either their rule or their religion beloved by the natives. It also shows us how readily Anglo-Indians writing in the *Indian Free Press* would call "public attention at home" to the new venture "ere it is too late," and cry "*Obsta principiis.*" No. VI, it may be noted, contains "an appeal to the rich Hindus of Calcutta to constitute a society for the relief of destitute widows, upon the principles of the Civil and Military Widows' Fund, established by order of Government." No. VII urges on Hindu parents to get their children instructed in the native grammar before imposing on them the study of foreign languages. No. VIII, prints the plea of a philanthropist, who observing the misery caused by prejudices of caste, urges the Hindus not to debar themselves thereby from mechanical pursuits, but to cultivate "such arts as would tend to their comfort, happiness and independence."<sup>3</sup>

The *Sam̐bād Kaumudī* was for the common people. But Rammohun desired to supply information and guidance to the educated classes also, and in a form more peculiarly suited to their needs. In

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3. For details of the contents of the *Sam̐bād Kaumudī* see J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India*, No. 169, pp. 285-94 ; for some samples of articles and news-items of the journal, *Ibid* pp. 302-14 ; original files of the *Sam̐bād Kaumudī* cannot unfortunately be traced now.—*Editors.*



the following year (1822) he started a weekly newspaper in Persian, called the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* or *Mirror of Intelligence*. This came out on Fridays, as the Bengali organ on Tuesdays. The style of the new weekly may be gathered from an article which appeared in its issue of Oct. 11, 1822, on "Ireland ; the Causes of its Distress and Discontents." The article opens with a short statement of the geographical position and political history of the island. "The Kings of England having shut their eyes against justice, gifted away to their own parasites the estates of the Irish noblemen." The account of the causes of Irish discontent is given with grave *naïveté* :—

Although all the inhabitants of this island call themselves the followers of the religion of Jesus Christ (upon whom and the rest of the prophets of God be peace and blessing !), yet a great number of them on account of their differing in some particular points of faith from the religion adopted by the King of England, follow their own clergymen and Pope in the performance of religious duties, and refuse adherence to the royal divines of the Established Church of England ; and in consequence the stipends of their own divines are not defrayed from the revenue of the land but depend on the contributions of private individuals. Besides this, on account of the stipends of the royal clergymen who are appointed to officiate in Ireland, the Government of Ireland exact taxes every year from those who positively refuse to be led by these clergymen in religious matters. How admirable is the observation of Saadi (on whom be mercy !)—

Do not say that these rapacious Ministers are the well-wishers of his Majesty :

For in proportion as they augment the revenue of the State, they diminish his popularity ;

O statesman, apply the revenue of the King towards the

comfort of the people ; then during their lives they will be loyal to him.<sup>4</sup>

This Persian poetry Mr. Gladstone only succeeded in translating into Parliamentary enactment in 1869. The second cause adduced is still (1897) an unsolved problem :—

The noble and other landed proprietors of Ireland pass their time in England, either with a view to raise themselves at Court, or to have all the luxuries of life at their command. And they spend in England an immense sum of the revenue of their lands, which they collect by means of stewards or farmers ; and consequently the tradespeople in England benefit by the liberal manner in which they spend their money, instead of the people of Ireland. And their rapacious stewards or farmers, for their own advantage and in order to show their zeal for the interest of their masters, unmercifully increase the rent of the land and extort those rents from the peasantry. So that many from their improper behaviour are now deprived of the means of subsistence.....

The natives are noted for their good natural abilities and open disposition, as well as for their generosity and hospitality. Foreigners are of opinion that from the climate of Ireland the people are of quick apprehension and easily provoked (God knows best !).

The practical upshot of these explanations of the situation is to announce the ravages of famine in Ireland and to give the names of “a number of respectable European gentlemen of liberal principles and a body of liberal natives of this country,” who have, “for the love of God,” subscribed for the relief of the starving Irish. Irishmen who are proud of their nationality will not readily forget this tribute of appreciation and succour from one of the earliest pioneers of the National movement in India.

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4. See above, p. 163.—*Editors.*



The National aspirations of Greece were not, however, favourably regarded by the *Mirat*. In an article published in November, 1822, quoted by a Calcutta paper as "expressing the feeling of the thinking part of the natives generally," the writer rejoices in the receipt of the news of Turkish victory over the rebellious Greeks. He is manifestly jubilant that the Tsar with his grand army and his resolve "to conquer Turkey and destroy Islamism" was held back by Austria and England. Of the Greeks it is said, "Having returned from the deserts of rebellion, they have now taken up their abode in the city of comfort and obedience." Editorial information or prescience was this time at fault, since the Greek rebellion which broke out in 1821 only ended in the achievement of independence in 1832. For this attitude to Greece, Mahomedan sympathy with Turkey was of course responsible.<sup>5</sup>

Such free criticism of English policy in Europe as well as satiric reference to British insolence in treatment of natives on the public roads, naturally aroused European susceptibilities. *John Bull*, a Calcutta print, is ridiculed by the *Hurkaru* (of September 2, 1822) for translating the Persian amiss and in its jealous apprehension rendering *tursa* "Christians" as "Infidels." The *Mirat* was not lacking in loyalty. It was most eulogistic in its remarks on Lord Hastings, the then Governor-General.

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5. For the prospectus contents, samples of editorial observations etc, of the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* see J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India*, Nos. 170, 171, 172 and 176, pp. 294-96, 298-300, 319-20.—Editors.

But the end of 1822 saw the close of Lord Hastings' Governor-Generalship with its liberal and enlightened policy. Between his departure and the arrival of Lord Amherst, his successor, the Hon. John Adams officiated as Acting Governor-General. This temporary elevation of an inferior official was marked by characteristically official measures for the restriction of liberty. A single paragraph from the *Mirat* in February attests the arbitrary measures being adopted :—

The eminently learned Dr. Bryce, the head minister of the new Scotch Church, having accepted the situation of Clerk of the Stationery belonging to the Honourable Company, Mr. Buckingham the editor, of the [*Calcutta*] *Journal* observed directly as well as indirectly that it was unbecoming of the character of the minister to accept a situation like this ; upon which the Governor-General, in consideration of his disrespectful expression, passed an order that Mr. Buckingham should leave India for England within the period of two months from the date of the receipt of this order, and that after the expiration of that period he is not allowed to remain a single day in India.<sup>6</sup>

The *Journal* was suppressed, and at the close of 1823, Mr. Arnot, Mr. Buckingham's assistant editor, was arrested and put on board a home-going ship.<sup>7</sup>

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6. Quoted in the *Calcutta Journal* March 1, 1823, (Majumdar *Op. cit.* pp. 319-20).—*Editors.*

7. Mr. Sandford Arnot was never the assistant editor of the *Calcutta Journal*. He was merely an assistant in the general staff of the paper. After the removal of Mr. Buckingham, the editor's post was held by Mr. J. F. Sandys, an Anglo-Indian (*Oriental Herald and Colonial Review* Vol. II, May to August, 1824, p. 230).—*Editors.*



The notice expelling Mr. Buckingham was followed up, suddenly and without notice, on March 14th, by a rigorous Press Ordinance from the acting Governor-General in Council. The preamble stated that "matters tending to bring the Government.....into hatred and contempt, and to disturb the peace.....of society have of late been frequently published and circulated in newspapers." The Ordinance prescribed that henceforth no one should publish a newspaper or other periodical without having obtained a license from the Governor-General in Council, signed by the Chief Secretary.

Before this regulation could come into force, the law required it to be fixed up in the Supreme Court for twenty days, and then if not disallowed, registered. It was accordingly entered on March 15th. On the 17th, Council moved the Court to allow parties feeling themselves aggrieved by the new regulation, to be heard. Sir Francis Macnaghten, the sole Acting Judge, fixed the 31st for the hearing of objections, but suggested that in the meanwhile the objectors would do well to state their plea in a memorial to Government. Foremost among those objectors was Rammohun Roy. He and his friends set about promoting the suggested petition, but, as he afterwards stated, "in preparing this memorial in both the English and the Bengalee languages, and discussing the alterations suggested by the different individuals who wished to give it their support and signature so much time was necessarily consumed, that it was not ready to be sent into circulation for signature until the 30th of March." Consequently only fifteen natives had

time to read and sign it ; and the Government had no time, even if they wished, to act. Another memorial of the same tenour was hastily drawn up next day signed by Rammohun and five other distinguished native gentlemen, and by counsel submitted to the Supreme Court. This memorial was attributed by its opponents to an English author, but was really, as was generally acknowledged later, the work of Rammohun.<sup>8</sup> It may be regarded as the *Areopagitica of Indian history*. Alike in diction and in argument, it forms a noble landmark in the progress of English culture in the East.<sup>9</sup>

The memorial first sets out the loyalty and attachment of the natives to British rule. They had trusted the Government with millions of their money. Relying on the Government, landlords had improved, instead of impoverishing as formerly, their estates. They had prayed for British victory during the Napoleonic wars. They rejoiced in the literary and political improvements due to British influence. They were most loyal in Calcutta, where British sway was best known. Possessing the same civil and religious liberty along with a lighter taxation, they were not inferior in loyalty to British-born subjects. Among the institutions which tended to improve the minds and ameliorate the condition of the natives was the native Press, and chiefly the newspaper Press with its four

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8. See Note II at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.

9. For the text of the *Memorial to the Supreme Court*, see Appendix I (A).—Editors.



native newspapers—two in Persian, two in Bengali.<sup>10</sup> These journals had done nothing to disparage the Government or to promote dissension. “Native authors and editors have always restrained themselves” from publishing matter obnoxious to the Government. Yet the Ordinance had been issued, requiring a license revocable at pleasure for all newspapers.

The first positive objection advanced against this new measure will probably strike all Westerns who are not Quakers or Tolstoyans with some surprise. In order to secure the license, the applicant was apparently required to make an affidavit or statement on oath. But, the Memorial proceeds :—

Those natives who are in more favourable circumstances and of respectable character, have such an invincible prejudice against making a voluntary affidavit, or undergoing the solemnities of an oath that they will never think of establishing a publication which can only be supported by a series of oaths and affidavits, abhorrent to their feelings and derogatory to their reputation amongst their countrymen.

Light is thrown on this intense antipathy by a letter in the *India Gazette*, dated Dec. 9, 1824, from which the following sentences may be quoted :—

I have frequently inquired of Hindus the reason of their objecting to swear ; and the answers I have received have been, “If I put my hand into the Gunga Jul [ Ganges Water ], I put my hand into the fire of hell”, or “Should I happen to say

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10. Apparently the Bengali newspapers referred to are the *Sambād Kaumudi* and the *Samāchār Chandrika* ; and the Persian ones are the *Mirat* and the *Jam-i-Jahan Numa*. See Note I at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.

one word which is not true, I shall be tormented during a hundred transmigrations", or "I shall sink my ancestors into places of torment." . . . They can make no distinction between voluntary and involuntary misstatements.\*

The Memorial goes on to show that "a complete stop" in the diffusion of knowledge of a certain kind will result from the new Ordinance. The better informed natives will be prevented instructing the people in the admirable system of British Government. Natives will be precluded from acquainting the Government with the errors and injustice which its executive officers may commit in various parts of the country. After this deprivation of a right which they had not abused, the natives could no longer feel justified in boasting of the privilege of British protection. But surely the British Government will not follow the precedent of Asiatic despotism in hoping to preserve power by keeping the people in darkness. Experience proves that a good Government grows stronger as its subjects become more enlightened. Every good ruler, aware of human imperfection and amenable to reverence for the Eternal Governor, must be conscious of the liability to error involved in managing a great Empire and of the need of ready means of ascertaining consequent grievances. But the only effectual means is "unrestrained

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\* The Grand Jury at the Calcutta Sessions in October, 1825, proposed the substitution of a solemn declaration for an oath in the case of natives, declaring "It is notorious that by forcing a Hindu of any of the superior classes to swear, we inflict on him a disgrace in his own eyes and in the eyes of his fellow-citizens."



liberty of publication," subject to the regular law of the land.

On this memorial being read, its prayer was supported by the speeches of Counsel, Mr. Fergusson and Mr. Turton. But Sir Francis Macnaghten gave his decision in favour of the Press Ordinance. In doing so, he absolutely ignored the native memorial, "not alluding to it in the most distant manner, nor to the arguments it contained." He further scandalized the memorialists by announcing that, before the Ordinance was entered or its merit argued in court, he had pledged himself to Government to give it his sanction.

There was but one resource left to the defenders of a free Press, and of that resource Rammohun did not hesitate to avail himself. He and his coadjutors appealed to the King in Council. The Appeal is one of the noblest pieces of English to which Rammohun put his hand. Its stately periods and not less stately thought recall the eloquence of the great orators of a century ago.<sup>11</sup> In a language and style for ever associated with the glorious vindication of liberty, it invokes against the arbitrary exercise of British power the principles and traditions which are distinctive of British history.<sup>12</sup>

An eloquent recognition of the benefits of British rule, benefits which had led Hindus to regard the English rather as deliverers than conquerors, sets in effective contrast a statement of the grievance complained of. The native press had aided

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11. See Note II at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*

12 For the text of the *Appeal to the King in Council* see Appendix I (B).—*Editors.*

in diffusing these blessings and in inculcating an appropriate gratitude. *The Friend of India*, an organ of European missionaries, had acknowledged the valuable service rendered by the native newspapers and expressly declared that the liberty they possessed had not been abused by them "in the least degree." The sudden withdrawal of this unabused liberty could only have as its motive the desire to afford Government and all its functionaries complete immunity from censure or exposure or public remark. The law of the land being competent to deal with any offences committed by newspapers against public order, the new and arbitrary restrictions, if meant seriously, seemed to suggest that Government intended to interrupt the regular course of justice and take the law into its own hands. A free Press had never yet caused a revolution; but revolutions had been innumerable where no free Press existed to ventilate grievances. If this avenue of redress should be closed to the natives, they would consider "the most peculiar excellence of the British Government of India" done away, and themselves condemned to perpetual oppression and degradation. It placed their civil and religious rights "entirely at the mercy of such individuals as may be sent from England to assume the executive authority, or"—and here comes a politely covered thrust at Acting Governor John Adams—"rise into power through the routine of office and who from long officiating in an inferior station, may have contracted prejudices against individuals or classes of men, which ought not to find shelter in the breast of the legislator." Subordinate officials being fallible, Government ought



to welcome the check imposed on them by the fact or dread of publicity. Even on the lowest ground, regarding India merely as a valuable property, the British nation would act wisely in seeing that so important an asset should have good care taken of it. Under Mahomedan rulers, Hindus had enjoyed every political privilege in common with Moslems, but under British sway they were not allowed similar equality with their conquerors; and the slight compensation offered them in liberty of their Press was a right they were the less prepared to forego. The Appeal concludes with the alternative; either let his Majesty restore the freedom of the Press or let him appoint an independent Commission to investigate from time to time the condition of his Hindu subjects, restraint of some kind being absolutely necessary to preserve them from the abuses of uncontrolled power.

Argument and eloquence, however, proved of no avail against the Anglo-Indian dread of native criticism. The Privy Council in November, 1825, after six months' consideration, declined to comply with the petition, presented by Mr. Buckingham, late of the *Calcutta Journal*, against the Press Ordinance of 1823.<sup>13</sup>

Not many months after that Ordinance came into force, the *Mirat* ceased to appear. It lived in all only some sixteen months. The editor declared

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13. From a letter of Colonel Leicester Stanhope to Rammohun Roy, dated June 9, 1825, it appears that the *Appeal to the King in Council* was actually handed over to King George IV through the Secretary, Board of Control. See Note II at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.

his inability to go on publishing under what he considered degrading conditions, and lamented that he, "one of the most humble of men," should be no longer able to contribute towards the intellectual improvement of his countrymen.<sup>14</sup> The *Asiatic Journal* of January, 1824, in recording the announcement, objects to it as having a "direct tendency to reflect on the act of Government." So sensitive were Anglo-Indian susceptibilities that even the negative protest of a journalist ceasing to publish his paper was resented. Rammohun did not carry his protest so far as to stop the *Samibād* also. It was continued, and in fact survived its founder for several years. The question arises, why, if both must not be sacrificed, was the *Mirat* selected for sacrifice? Two reasons probably weighed with Rammohun: the greater cost and the greater risk of Government interference. The *Mirat* was addressed to a cultured constituency. The outlay involved in its production would therefore be larger, and its circulation smaller; while its more critical attitude would naturally excite the keener suspicion in the breast of thin-skinned officials.\*

The educational purpose which inspired Rammohun's journalism led him into several more distinctively academic enterprises. His share in

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14. See Appendix I(C)—*Editors*.

\* At this point Miss Collet's revision of the continuator's manuscript ceases altogether. Of his work up to this point she sent (dictated) expressions of generous approval. The "few points" in this chapter which, she said, required "touching up," she regretted she was not then strong enough to specify. She reserved them for the next interview,—which, alas! never took place.



founding, along with Sir E. H. East and Mr. David Hare, the old Hindu College, has already been noticed.<sup>15</sup> In 1822 he opened on his own account an Anglo-Indian School for imparting a free education in English to Hindu boys. With the exception of a few subscriptions from other friends, the whole of the funds required were supplied by Rammohun.<sup>16</sup> Mr. William Adam, who was one of the visitors, thus speaks of the School in 1827 :—

Two teachers are employed, one at a salary of 150 Rs. per month, and the other at a salary of 70 Rs. per month, and from 60 to 80 Hindu boys are instructed in the English language. The doctrines of Christianity are not inculcated, but the duties of morality are carefully enjoined, and the *facts* belonging to the history of Christianity are taught to those pupils who are capable of understanding general history.

From reports of examinations, the school seems to have proved a fair success. The founder's control over it was not less real and continuous than his support of it. Mr. William Adam strongly desired to make it a public institution, to solicit for it public subscriptions, and to put it under the control of the Unitarian Committee. But Rammohun

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15. See above, pp. 69-70, 102 104.—*Editors.*

16. The institution was popularly known as the Anglo-Hindu School. Rammohun had no faith in the type of secular education received by the students of the Hindu College. Religious and moral instructions formed part of the curriculum of his Anglo-Hindu School. One of the distinguished students of this school was the young Debendranath Tagore, son of Rammohun's intimate friend, Dwarkanath Tagore, and the father of Rabindranath Tagore. For interesting details regarding the Anglo-Hindu School see J. K. Majumder *Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* Nos. 151, 155, 156, 157, 159, 160, 161, pp. 264-65, 269-75.—*Editors.*

firmly refused his consent to the scheme. Mr. Adam was much distressed and felt it his duty accordingly to restrict his activity as a visitor. Even in that narrowed sphere he came into collision with Rammohun's strong will. He complained that his fellow visitor, whom he considered quite unsuited for the post, upset the plans and practices which Mr. Adam had painfully introduced into the school. But Rammohun would not part with the obnoxious visitor, whose popularity with the natives was great ; and Mr. Adam resigned in high dudgeon. This occurred in 1828.

Shortly after the opening of this school, in 1823,—the year most crowded with his theological polemic,—we find Rammohun in the thick of a great educational controversy. The British Government was known to be appropriating funds for the promotion of Indian education ; and the kind of promotion most desirable was the subject of eager discussion. Should the Government seek simply to develop and deepen the education already in vogue in India ? Or should it boldly endeavour to introduce the innovations of European science and European culture ? The "Orientalists" clamoured for the exclusive pursuit of Oriental studies. They were hotly opposed by the "Anglicists,"<sup>17</sup> chief

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17. The term "Anglicist" is misleading in the present context. It may create the impression that Rammohun and others subscribing to his view point, merely pleaded for the introduction of an educational system *through the medium of the English language*. Their protest however was not so formal. In his famous letter to Lord Amherst, Rammohun made it very clear that what he wanted was that the future educational



among whom was Rammohun Roy. The Government seemed inclined to yield to the Orientalist view and announced the intention of establishing a Sanskrit College in Calcutta. The step drove Rammohun, undaunted by the scant courtesy which his former appeals to the British authorities had received, to address a *Letter on English Education* to Lord Amherst, the new Governor-General.<sup>18</sup> In this letter he expresses profound regret that the Government was proposing to found a Sanskrit College—"to impart such knowledge as is already current in India." Such a seminary would, he argues, resemble, those existing in Europe before Lord Bacon's day and would only "load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practical use." The Sanskrit language by reason of its great difficulty had been for ages a lamentable check to the diffusion of knowledge; but if it must be studied for the sake of the information it contains, its study might be promoted by grants to existing institutions where it was already taught.<sup>19</sup> Rammohun sees no advant-

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system of India should be *modernized* by the inclusion of *different branches of contemporary western science and technology in the curriculum*.—Editors.

18. For the text of the letter see Appendix II.—Editors.

19. This part of the letter has unfortunately been ignored by some modern writers who have discussed Rammohun's position as an educationist. The latter's warm advocacy for the introduction of *modernism* in education did not wipe out his great love for the Sanskrit language and profound admiration for the genuine Sanskrit scholars of the orthodox school, teaching at their *chatuspāṭhīs*. See Note III at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.

age in requiring young men to spend the best years of their life in the study of philological niceties. A more remarkable feature of his contention is its criticism of the Vedānta. He had, it will be remembered, translated large portions of the Vedānta into modern tongues. He had warmly defended its teachings against the attacks of the missionaries. Nay, in the fourth number of the *Brahmanical Magazine* which was published almost in the very month in which this *Letter* was written, he was still engaged in defending Vedāntic doctrine. Yet he now writes :—

Neither can much improvement arise from such speculations as the following, which are the themes suggested by the Vedānta,—in what manner is the soul absorbed in the Deity? What relation does it bear to the Divine Essence? Nor will youths be fitted to be better members of Society by the Vedāntic doctrines which teach them to believe that all visible things have no real existence, that as father, brother, &c., have no actual entity they consequently deserve no real affection, and therefore the sooner we escape from them and leave the world the better.

This last objection to the Vedāntic doctrines is precisely that advanced by the missionaries in the *Samāchār Darpan* and assailed by Rammohun in the *Brahmanical Magazine*. The apparent breach of consistency involved in its endorsement here, will be considered subsequently.

After further objections to the “imaginary learning” of Hindu schools, he summarily assures Lord Amherst that “the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness.” What he wants to see established is “a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philoso-



phy, chemistry, anatomy, with other useful sciences." This, he urges "may be accomplished with the sums proposed, by employing a few gentlemen of talent and learning educated in Europe and providing a College furnished with necessary books, instruments and other apparatus."

Of this letter Bishop Heber wrote in March, 1824\* :—

Rammohun Roy, a learned native, who has sometimes been called, though I fear without reason, a Christian, remonstrated with this [Orientalist] system last year, in a paper which he sent me to be put into Lord Amherst's hands and which for its good English, good sense, and forcible arguments, is a real curiosity, as coming from an Asiatic."

The patronizing tone of these remarks reveals only too plainly the unfortunate attitude which Christian missionaries, even the most devout, assumed towards natives of India, who were, to say the very least, certainly not their inferiors.

"It was owing, perhaps, to this agitation," remarks Jogendra Chandra Ghosh on this letter to Lord Amherst, "that the foundation stone of the building intended for the Sanskrit College was laid in the name of the Hindu College (February, 1824), and the Hindu College was located there together with the Sanskrit College."†

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\* Bishop Heber's *Journal* (entitled *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India*, Two-volume Edition, London, 1828, Vol. II p. 388.—*Editors*.)

† The controversy between Orientalist and Anglicist, after ranging for some dozen years was brought to a conclusion by Macaulay's famous Minute of Feb. 2nd, 1835, and Lord William Bentinck's consequent resolution of March 7th. which by constituting English the official language of India gave the ascendancy to Western ideals of education.

Within about a year of the completion of this Sanskrit and Hindu College, we find Rammohun taking a new and important step in his career as educational reformer. We learn from Mr. William. Adam, writing under date July 27, 1826, that :—

Rammohun Roy has lately built a small but very neat and handsome college, which he calls the Vedānta College, in which a few youths are at present instructed by a very eminent Pandit, in Sanskrit literature, with a view to the propagation and defence of *Hindu* Unitarianism. With this institution he is also willing to connect instructions in European science, and learning, and in *Christian* Unitarianism, provided the instructions are conveyed in the Bengali or Sanskrit language.

The Western reader may perhaps be surprised to find Rammohun—scarcely two years after his opposing the Government scheme of a Sanskrit College because of its promoting instruction in the Vedāntic philosophy,—himself founding a Sanskrit and Vedānta College. It may at first appear as much of a paradox as his advancing in the Letter to Lord Amherst the same arguments against the

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[We cannot be sure whether, as Mr. J. C. Ghosh has supposed, Rammohun's letter ultimately influenced the decision of the authorities to locate the Sanskrit and the Hindu Colleges together. It should however be noted that the letter did much valuable ground-work for the ultimate triumph of the progressive group in the sphere of education. It has been admitted in the *Cambridge History of India* Vol. VI, p. 110 : "...the strongest influence in bringing the "English Party" into existence was the petition of Rammohun Roy and the practical experience of the Committee." See in this connection A. K. Sen's excellent article "Rammohun's Letter on English Education" in the *Centenary Edition* of Rammohun's *English Works* (Social and Educational), published by the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj (Calcutta, 1934), Note III. pp. 19-25.—Editors.]



Vedānta which he had denounced in the *Brahmanical Magazine*. But to understand these seeming inconsistencies we must bear in mind the complex nature of the Vedāntic system and the different practical issues bound up in the several controversies. The teachings of the Vedānta lend themselves to remarkable diversity of theological interpretation. They are appealed to equally by dualistic and non-dualistic schools of thought. They contain passages which breathe a lofty and ethical theism ; in other places they seem to countenance a Pantheism that is simply Acosmism,—the denial of all finite existence ; and they also include much that, judged by the standards of Western culture, is puerile and fantastic where it is not demonstrably false. According as the Vedānta is taught with or without a proper selective adjustment of its widely various contents, its value as a subject of instructions may be set high or low. In the ordinary Hindu schools it was taught in false perspective, with a discrimination exercised if at all in favour of what was trivial, incorrect, polytheistic. Rammohun therefore opposed with all his might the suggestion that the British Government should perpetuate or encourage this kind of Vedāntic instruction. At the same time he saw in the Vedānta rightly handled and “rightly divided” a means for leading his countrymen out of their prevailing superstition and idolatry into a pure and elevated Theism. Their devotion to the Vedāntic scriptures was the lever by which Rammohun hoped to lift them into a simpler and nobler faith. Therefore he founded the Vedānta College ; and therefore also he controverted the missionaries’ wholesale dispa-

ragement of the Vedānta. If the missionaries had succeeded in discrediting the Vedānta, they would in Rammohun's eyes have broken down the bridge which enabled men to pass from Hindu Polytheism to Hindu Theism. He thus combated both the conservative Christian who advocated indiscriminate rejection and the conservative Hindu who advocated the indiscriminate retention of Vedāntic teaching ; and he provided for a discriminating instruction in the ancient system which should have the approval of liberal Hindus and liberal Christians.<sup>20</sup>

This method is illustrated by a tract on *Different Modes of Worship* which appeared January 18, 1825. It was written in Sanskrit by Rammohun Roy under the name of Śivaprasad Śarmā, and it was translated into English, with English annotations, by Rammohun Roy under the name of "A Friend of the Author." It propounded the difficulty : Some Śāstras enjoin worship by means of idols, others dissuade from it : how to reconcile the contrary advice ? It finds answer in certain sayings of Vyāsa in the *Bhāgavata* and of Śrīdhar his commentator, to the effect that idol-worship, along with ritual observances, is only of value so long as a man has not yet become conscious that the Lord of the Universe dwells in all beings. When he attains that consciousness, his worship

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20. It would be fair to reemphasise here that Rammohun regarded the *Vedānta* as the highest spiritual philosophy in the world. See above, pp. 97-98. As we shall see in Chapter VIII below, to the last breath of his life he remained true to the *Vedāntic* tradition and died with the holy *praṇava* (aum) on his lips.—*Editors*.



becomes the discharge of the four duties of "Charity to the needy," "Honour to others," "Friendship," and "An equal regard to all creatures," under the observant conviction that "the all-powerful Lord is in the heart watching over the soul." The writer remarks in a note that "worship through matter" was sanctioned in Judaism though forbidden in Christianity. This reference suggests that Rammohun conceived of his Hindu Unitarianism standing to historic Hinduism as the New Covenant stood to the Old : a development of the spiritual core at the expense of the ritual and material kernel.

His Vedānta College and his translations from the Vedānta served alike as witness to his continuity with the historic past of India and as the implement enabling him to connect her with a progressive future. But of his equal readiness to avail himself of the powerful solvents of English influences we are reminded by his publication in 1826 of a Bengali Grammar in English. His Anglo-Hindu school and his "Anglicist" remonstrances had shown how eager he was to introduce the better-educated classes of India into the new world of European literature ; the Bengali Grammar reveals his anxiety to facilitate the inroad of the aggressive European in the dialect and understanding of the common people. In his Introduction to the Grammar (June 12) he refers to "the persevering exertions of many European philanthropists in the noble attempt to ameliorate the moral condition of [ the ] inhabitants" ; who "with a view to facilitate intercourse between themselves and the natives" and without expectation of finding any literary

treasures in the language, labour to acquire the vernacular. This circumlocution in describing the missionaries and the careful avoidance of any reference to their distinctively religious work are significant ; and are still more so when taken along with the express declaration which follows that he intended the Grammar "as a humble present for these worthy persons," to aid them "in their own studies or in directing those of others." Of this contribution to missionary philology Mr. W. Adam wrote at the time, "The work throws much new light upon the idioms of the language, but the arrangement is defective in consequence of the desultory mode of composition he indulges in".<sup>21</sup> A Bengali version of it was brought out by the author in 1833.<sup>22</sup> Bengali owes much to Rammohun. It was his writings chiefly which raised it into a literary language. As by Wiclif in England and Luther in Germany, so also by Rammohun in Bengal, the despised dialect of the common people was made the vehicle of the highest ideas and became thereby permanently elevated. Reformation in religion has often proved ennoblement in language.

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21. For an estimate of Rammohun's Bengali Grammar, see Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji's article "*Rammohun Roy as a Grammarian*" in the Centenary Edition of the *English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* (Social and Educational) (Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta 1934), Note IV, pp. 25-30. See also *Students' Rammohun Centenary Volume* (M. C. Sarkar & Sons, Calcutta) pp. 50-54, where the same article appears with an appendix.—Editors.

22. Entitled *Gauḍīya Vyākaran*. It was published by the School Book Society in April, 1833.—Editors.



During the whole of this period of theological controversy and journalistic and educational activity Rammohun never left out of sight the more directly philanthropic projects to which he had early given himself. The campaign against Suttee was not allowed to flag. He used the *Sambād Kaumudi* as a regular weapon in this agitation. It was an agitation slowly but steadily affecting the attitude of the British authorities to the whole question. Of this the proceedings of the Nizamat Adalat on the 25th of May, 1821, supply striking proof. The Chief Judge Leycester, while of opinion that Suttee could not be put down generally, advised its suppression "by proclamation" in divisions where it was little in practice, viz., Dacca, Moorshedabad and Bareilly and in Allahabad, Fattehpore, Bundelkhand, and Kalpi. The second judge, Mr. Courtney Smith, to his lasting honour be it recorded, demanded the "entire and immediate abolition" of Suttee. The two other judges, of those who drew up "Minutes" on the subject, pronounced against abolition as likely to imperil public order, but one of them, Mr. Dorin, suggested that the barbarous rite should be suppressed in a single district, say the Hooghly district, by way of experiment and example. He emphasized the extremely significant fact that, in answer to a circular sent out the previous year to the magistrates of the Lower Provinces, "about one half of the magistrates" declared in favour of total abolition at once. The reply of Lord Hastings, made on the 17th of the following July, stated that he could not approve any of the three suggestions, not feeling that the time had arrived for either experimental, gradual, or entire

prohibition. He expressed the hope that the more educated natives would "gradually become disposed to abandon the practice." He had doubtless in mind the propaganda of Rammohun Roy and his followers.

As though to lend confirmation to this hope, the indefatigable reformer in the course of the same year (1822) published a valuable tract on "Modern encroachments on the ancient rights of females according to the Hindu Law of inheritance." In this he applied to social reform the method he had found fruitful in theological discussion. He appealed from the present to the past and over against the prescription of custom set the authority of antiquity. By numerous citations he proves that "All the ancient law-givers unanimously award to a mother an equal share with her son in the property left by her deceased husband, in order that she may spend her remaining days independently of her children." But unfortunately later jurists made void, by their expositions, this salutary law. As a consequence "both stepmothers and mothers have, in reality, been left destitute in the division of their husband's property and the right of a widow exists in the theory only among the learned but unknown to the populace." Hence, "a woman who is looked up to as the sole mistress by the rest of a family one day, on the next becomes dependent on her sons and subject to the slights of her daughters-in-law." On the death of their husbands women had only three courses before them :—

Firstly. To live a miserable life as entire slaves to others without indulging any hope of support from another husband.

Secondly. To walk in the paths of unrighteousness for their maintenance and independence.



Thirdly. To die on the funeral pile of their husbands, loaded with the applause and honour of the neighbours.

Having shown that Hindu antiquity, far from demanding Suttee, had made honourable provision for the maintenance of the widow<sup>23</sup>, Rammohun passes on to attack the institution of polygamy, which had made difficult the fulfilment of the ancient law of female inheritance. Where plurality of wives was most frequent, as in Bengal, the number of female suicides was proportionately great. "This horrible polygamy among the Brahmuns is directly contrary to the law given by ancient authors." A second marriage while the first wife was alive was allowed only on the ground of specified physical or moral defects.

It is interesting to learn from Mr. William Adam's letters of 1826, Rammohun's personal antipathy to polygamy. He was, as we have previously related, married by his father at nine years of age to two child-wives<sup>24</sup>. To both he felt himself bound to remain faithful, but on the death of one (in 1824), who was the mother of his children, he became in practice as in theory a monogamist. It is sad to

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23. Rammohun and the progressive group led by him had actually gone further than that. The *India Gazette* as quoted by the *Asiatic Journal* May 18, 1819, informs us that they anticipated Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar by emphasising the *desirability of the remarriage of the Hindu widows* in one of their meetings held sometime before that date (Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 11. p. 18).—Editors.

24. His father actually married Rammohun *three times* during the latter's childhood. The first wife died at a very early age.—Editors.

find that even so his married life was not too happy. The *Asiatic Journal* for November, 1833, states in its obituary notice that "Rammohun Roy has left in India a wife from whom he has been separated (on what account we know not) for some years." Babu N. N. Chatterjee states\* that Rammohun "lived apart from his wives simply because they were Hindus and he was considered an outcast by them. His wives did not like to live with him." All the more commendable, therefore, is his uniform and chivalrous championship of womanhood. So strongly was he opposed to polygamy that (Mr. Adam tells us) he inserted clauses in his will disinheriting any son or more remote descendant who had more than one wife at the same time. But he was, we are informed, a monogamist not on religious grounds but on grounds of expediency.

In his tract on the subject, Rammohun further recalls ancient authorities to show that a daughter was entitled to receive a fourth part of the portion which a son could inherit. This had been so far set aside by modern practice that the daughter was deprived of any portion if there were a son surviving, and was even—in express violation of ancient

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\* In a letter to the author, of date January 2, 1883. [A similar tragedy, it may here be noted, darkened the private life of Rammohun's intimate friend and associate, Dwarkanath Tagore. The latter's wife also severed all relations with him and lived apart because *Dwarkanath mixed and ate with Europeans* ! See the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* for Jaistha, 1838 Saka, p. 28, and also the Bengali *Autobiography* of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore (entitled *Atmajīvanī*), Third Edition, (Edited by Satish Chandra Chakravarti, Visvabharati, 1927) pp. 298, 310—12.—*Editors.*]



law—sold in marriage. He concludes the tract with a guarded hope that not merely Hindu Pandits but European judges might be called in to pronounce on cases of disputed inheritance.<sup>25</sup>

Lord Hastings' despath of August 15, 1822, which was written a few months before his departure from India, and which may therefore be taken to sum up the view formed during his Governor-Generalship, shows the very high importance which the British Government attached to Rammohun's campaign against Suttee. After deploring the increase in the number of victims during the previous year, which he attributed to the fanatic spirit roused by the divided state of feeling among the Hindus, "his lordship in council does not despair of the best effects resulting from the free discussion of the matter by the people themselves, independently of European influence and interposition ; and . . . it only remains for him to watch carefully the indications of a change of sentiment amongst the people . . . and to encourage to the utmost very favourable disposition." He thus went out of office with the hope that the practice would be extirpated not by the peremptory authority of the Government but by persuasive arguments of Rammohun and his following. He had reason highly to appraise the effect of their humane propaganda. It is interestingly attested in Bishop Heber's

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25. See in this connection Mr. Atul Chandra Gupta's thoughtful Bengali article "Rammohun O Inga-Bhāratīya Ain" in the *Students' Rammohun Centenary Volume* (M. C. Sarkar & Sons, Calcutta), Bengali Section, pp. 2-12.—Editors.

*Journal*.<sup>26</sup> From a conversation with Dr. Marshman, January 15, 1824, he learns in the first place that Suttee had increased of recent years, an increase which the Baptist imputed to "the increasing luxury of the higher and middling classes, and to their expensive imitation of European habits," which made them eager to avoid the expense of maintaining widows. "But," Dr. Marshman is reported to have said, "the Brahmuns have no longer the power and popularity which they had when he first remembers India, and among the laity many powerful and wealthy persons agree, and publicly express their agreement, with Rammohun Roy in reprobating the custom, which is now well known to be not commanded by any of the Hindu Sacred Books, though some of them speak of it as a meritorious sacrifice." But opinion among the Government officials was, Bishop Heber remarks, still divided as to the practicability of prohibition. The Nizamat Adalat was indeed, slowly moving towards the desired end. Mr. Haringay, one of the judges, proposed in a minute of June 28, 1823, to issue further regulations enabling the police to prevent Suttees taking place until full inquiry had been made. At the same time he personally approved of Judge Smith's conviction in favour of total and immediate suppression. His brother judges however held that to impose fresh regulations and safeguards was to deepen in the native mind the impression of the rite being legalized and countenanced by Govern-

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26. See Bishop Heber's *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India* Two-Volume Ed., John Murray, London, 1828. Vol. I pp. 57-58.—Editors.



ment. Rather than add new regulations, the majority of the Court were (July 23, 1824) of opinion that it would be preferable to pass an enactment for the future prohibition of Suttees throughout the country. The pressure of public opinion in Great Britain and in their own Court, led the Directors to express themselves very vigorously on the subject to the new Governor-General, in a despatch of June 17, 1823. On Dec. 3rd, 1824, Lord Amherst, in the course of his reply, declared :—

We entirely participate with your honourable Court in the feelings of detestation with which you view the rite and in your earnest desire to have it suppressed ; and we beg to assure you that nothing but the apprehension of evils infinitely greater than those arising from the existence of the practice could induce us to tolerate it for a single day.

The annual returns of the number of Suttees, with the comments of the Judges and the Governor in Council, kept the fires of public indignation well stoked. Each annual increase horrified, each decrease encouraged, the uprightminded into projects of reform. We append a table of totals up to the end of the period covered by this chapter.\*

#### Suttees in the Bengal Presidency

Divisions.	1819	1820	1821	1822	1823	1824	1825	1826
Calcutta ...	421	370	392	328	340	373	398	324
Dacca ...	55	51	52	45	40	40	101	65
Moorshedabad ..	25	21	12	22	13	14	21	8
Patna ...	40	42	69	70	49	†59	†47	†65
Benares ...	92	93	114	102	121	†76	†55	†48
Bareilly ...	17	20	15	16	12	10	17	8
	650	597	654	583	575	572	639	518

\* See above pp. 83-84 for statistics of Suttees in the year 1815—1818.

† The increase in Patna and decrease in Benares after

The famine in the Southern provinces of the Deccan in 1824 called forth from fourteen native signatories a singularly catholic appeal, which if not composed (as it was not signed) by Rammohun Roy, shows how his inter-religional views were spreading. The appeal was for funds to establish in the famine-stricken districts Chatrams, or charitable inns, for Hindus, Moslems, Christians, as the case might require, each providing the food needed by the respective religionaries. Christians were adjured to contribute in the name of Christ, and the duty was enforced by reference to His teachings. Moslems were similarly reminded of the precept and example of their Holy Prophet and Ali; and Hindus were referred to human sayings of Krishna and Bhisma. The Appeal proceeds:

We conjure those of the three faiths of Christians, Mussulmans, and Hindus, in the name of our common *Creator* and *God*, to show the affection that man, as a commoner of nature, should bear to his fellowman, by relieving so many individuals of those three religions who are dying daily for want of their usual sustenance.

The same wide sympathy with men of different faiths which breathes through this Appeal is illustrated by a project which Rammohun cherished a year later. Writing in 1826, Mr. William Adam announces that Rammohun "is about commencing a life of Mahomet, who has, he thinks, been much misrepresented both by his friends and his enemies." The line he took over the *Precepts of Jesus*, against non-Christians and orthodox alike,

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1823 is largely due to the fact that the district of Goruckpore was then detached from the division of Benares and added to that of Patna.



suggests the line which this biography of the prophet of Arabia would have followed. It is a matter of profound regret that the idea was never carried out. A study of the founder of Islam by the founder of the Brahmo Samaj would doubtless have formed a valuable contribution to the religious development of modern India.

The close of this period was temporarily clouded for Rammohun by grave domestic anxiety. His son was "the confidential native servant of the Burdwan Collector of Revenue" and was prosecuted on a charge of embezzlement of the public money. He seems, writes Mr. Adam, "to be the victim, partly of the negligence of his employer and the envy of his fellow servants."<sup>27</sup> It was only a part of the campaign of persecution carried on in the law courts against the hated reformer. Suspense of the issue weighed heavily on Rammohun's mind. We find him under the pressure of it neglecting his correspondence with English and American friends, as Mr. Adam feels bound to explain to them. The youth was acquitted in the Circuit Court in February, 1826, but the case was carried thence before the Sudder Nizamat Adalat<sup>28</sup>. Happily, Mr. Adam was able to write in August of the same year that "Rammohun Roy is very well, having lately brought the prosecution against his son to a successful issue."

27. The accused was Radhaprasad, the elder son of Rammohun. See above, p. 52.—*Editors*.

28. The case of Radhaprasad Roy was referred to the Sadar Nizamat Adalat by Mr. Walpole, third Judge of the Calcutta Circuit Court. It was the Sadar Nizamat Adalat which had finally acquitted Radhaprasad (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* p. lxxxvii).—*Editors*.

But the end of this vexatious forensic attack was not yet.

The intensity of fatherly affection which Rammohun here displayed sets in a more remarkable light the method of education he had adopted with his growing boys. Mr. William Adam, in his lecture on Rammohun, declares :

He employed no direct means, no argument of authority, no expostulation or entreaty to turn his sons from the idolatrous practices and belief, in which they had been educated by the female members of his family and by the Brahman priests whom they consulted and followed. He gave them a good education ; by his personal demeanour secured a place in their esteem and affection ; set them an example in his life and writings ; and then left them to the influence of idolatrous associations on the one hand and to the unfettered exercise of their reason on the other. His eldest son, the hope of his heart, for some time after attaining mature age, continued an idolator ; but before his father's death, with his younger brother abandoned the supersition of the country, and zealously cooperated with his father.\*

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\* From Rakhal Das Halder, in his notes to the lecture (entitled *A Lecture on the Life and Labours of Rammohun Roy* referred to above, p. 127n) we learn concerning these youths, that the elder died without leaving male issue, and that the younger, Ramaprasad Roy, "lived to attain eminence at the bar of the highest Judicial Tribunal of Bengal, and was the first native justice elect of the High Court at Fort William, though he was prevented by death from sitting on the Bench." (Radhaprasad, the elder son of Rammohun had two daughters—Chandrajyoti and Maitreyi. Chandrajyoti was given in marriage to Shyamlal Chattopadhyaya, a Brahmin of Murshidabad. Ramaprasad Roy was the father of two sons, Harimohan and Pyarimohan, both of whom died childless. For a life-sketch of Ramaprasad Roy, see Manmathanath Ghosh's Bengali work *Sekaler Lok*, Calcutta, 1346 B. S. pp. 77-146.—Editors).



## SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

### I

The two earliest news-papers in the Bengali language were the '*Vaṅgāl Gazette*' and the *Samāchār Darpan*. Both were weekly papers. The first was edited by Gaṅgākishore Bhattacharya and the second was the organ of the missionaries of the Baptist Church, Serampore. A controversy has raged round the question as to which of these two papers was published first. The *Friend of India*, the English mouth-piece of the Serampore Baptist Mission, claimed that honour for the *Samāchār Darpan* whereas similar claims had been advanced for the *Vaṅgāl Gazette* among others by Bhavani Charan Banerji, the editor of the *Samāchār Chandrika* and Iswar-chandra Gupta, the editor of the *Sambād-Prabhākar*. (See Brajendranath Banerji *Vāṅglā Sāmayik Patra* New Ed. Calcutta, 1354 B. S., Vol. I pp. 5-15.)

The *Asiatic Journal* January, 1819, however quotes the *Oriental Star*, May 16, 1818 (published from Calcutta) as giving the following news-item : "Amongst the improvements which are taking place in Calcutta we observe with satisfaction that the publication of a Bengalee news-paper *has been commenced.*" (italics ours—editors). This "Bengalee News-paper" is certainly not the *Sāmachār Darpan*, the first issue of which is definitely known to have been published on the 23rd May, 1818. So there seems to be no other alternative than to suppose that the 'news-paper' referred to by the *Oriental Star* was the *Vaṅgāl Gazette*. As it had been notified previously in the *India Gazette*, May 14, 1818, that the *Vaṅgāl Gazette* was *intended to be published*, we may tentatively hold that the news-paper was born sometime between the 14th May and the 16th May, of 1818 i.e. on the 15th May 1818. This would make it senior to the *Samāchār Darpan* by a week.

Harachandra Roy, one of the directors of the *Vaṅgāl Gazette*, was a member of the *Atmīya Sabhā* and a close associate of Rammohun. It may be assumed that the

publication of this first Bengali news-paper owed its inspiration largely to Rammohun Roy. In support of this hypothesis we may mention that Rammohun's first Bengali tract on *Satī* was printed in the pages of the *Vaṅgāl Gazette*. [See Prabhat Chandra Ganguli's article 'Pratham Vāṅglā Saṁbādpatra', Brajendranath Banerji's rejoinder and Mr. Ganguli's final reply in the *Prabāsi* Vol. 40, No. 2 (Phālgun 1347 B. S.) pp. 654-59.] It should of course have to be noted that prior to the appearance of both the *Vaṅgāl Gazette* and the *Samāchār Darpan*, the Serampore missionaries had started publishing the Bengali periodical *Digdarsan* from April, 1818. This however was a *monthly magazine* and not a *news-paper*.

Of the four news-papers under Indian management (mentioned on page 178n. above) that became the targets of the Press Ordinance the *Sambad Kaumudi* and the *Mirat* belonged to Rammohun Roy. On page 172 above, it has been stated that the *Kaumudi* appeared on each Tuesday. This is however true of the first fifteen numbers of the paper. From March 16, 1822 (the date of the sixteenth issue) it began to be published every Saturday (Banerji *Vāṅgla Sāmayik Patra* New Ed., Calcutta 1354 B. S. Vol. I p. 18). The *Jam-i-Jahan Numa* started its career on March 28, 1822, as a weekly paper in Urdu. From its eighth issue however it became bilingual and came to be published in both Urdu and Persian. A little later, the Urdu section was dropped and it continued as a purely Persian weekly. It was edited by Harihar Datta, a close associate of Rammohun, and ex-editor of the *Samḡād Kaumudī* (*Ibid* p. 69). The *Samāchār Chandrikā* a Bengali weekly and a rival of the *Kaumudī*, came out for the first time on March 5, 1822. It was the mouth-piece of the conservative Hindu public and was edited by the Bhavani Charan Banerji (*Ibid*. p. 21).

## II

Rammohun's authorship of the Memorial against the Press Ordinance had been clearly attested by the Proprietors of the East India Company in course of their requisitioned meeting held at the East India House on July 23, 1824. The



subject of discussion was the "The Press in India—Banishment of Mr. Buckingham," as reported by the *Oriental Herald and Colonial Review* Vol. III (September to December 1824), pp. 81-128. Of the gentlemen present in the meeting, Mr. R. Jackson was the only one who was originally under the impression that Mr. Buckingham had been the author of the Memorial (*Ibid* p. 112). The latter who also attended, however denied it categorically in the following words: "To set the question with respect to the authorship of the Memorial at rest, so far as regards myself, I beg to state in explanation that I never knew of the existence of the document until after I left India. At the moment of my leaving Calcutta, no apprehension was entertained that any new regulations would be framed with respect to the press; and unless I could be supposed to have the gift of prophecy, it was quite impossible, that I could either foresee the state of things that was about to happen or prepare any Memorial for such an occasion." (*Ibid* p. 125).

The tremendous impression created by Rammohun's *Appeal to the King in Council* is well reflected in the letter of Colonel Leicester Stanhope to Rammohun Roy, dated London, June 9, 1825, from which we quote the following extract:

"Worthy Philanthropist,

Your memorial to the King of England, demonstrating the usefulness and safety of a free press in British India, and praying for its restoration, I forwarded with a letter, to the Secretary of the Board of Control. He honoured me with a courteous reply, stating that it had been graciously received by His Majesty.

The Memorial, considering it as the production of a foreigner and a Hindoo of this age, displays so much sense, knowledge, argument, and even eloquence, that the friends of liberty have dwelt upon it with wonder ;....."

For the full text of the letter, see *Oriental Herald and Colonial Review* Vol. VI (July to September, 1825) pp. 105-07. In its first paragraph the letter, clearly indicates that the *Petition* went to King George IV through the Secretary, Board of Control. The second paragraph records the impression

of the writer regarding its style and contents. The tribute paid here, agrees, it may be pointed out, almost word for word with the judgement expressed by the author on page 180 above.

### III

In his writings Rammohun has given ample indication that he was second to none in point of love and respect for the Sanskrit language and the genuine *pandits* of the old school. In the preface to the first number of the *Brahmanical Magazine* he reminds his missionary antagonists : "In consideration of the small huts in which Brahmans of learning generally reside, and the simple food, such as vegetables, etc., which they are accustomed to eat, and the poverty which obliges them to live upon charity, the missionary gentlemen may not, I hope, abstain from controversy from contempt of them, for truth and true religion do not always belong to wealth and power, high names or lofty palaces". (*The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* ed. by Kalidas Nag and Debajyoti Burmon, Part II p. 138). For the corresponding Bengali statement in Rammohun's *Brāhmaṇa Sevadhi* see his *Collected Bengali Works* published by the Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Parishad, No. 5, p. 4.

When taunted publicly by "A Christian" in course of the Tytler controversy with the supercilious remark that Hindus "who are indebted to Christians for the civil liberty they enjoy, as well as for the rays of intelligence, now beginning to dawn on them," are "in the most ungenerous manner" insulting "their benefactors" by criticising the tenets of Christianity,—Rammohun had come out with the following reply : "If by the "Ray of Intelligence" for which the *Christian* says, we are indebted to the English, he means the introduction of useful mechanical arts, I am ready to express my assent, and also my gratitude ; but with respect to *Science, Literature or Religion* I do not acknowledge that we are placed under any obligation. For by a reference to history it may be proved that the World was indebted to *our ancestors* for the first dawn of knowledge which sprang up in the East, and thanks to the Goddess of Wisdom, we have still a philosophical and copious language of



our own, which distinguishes us from other nations who cannot express scientific or abstract ideas without borrowing the language of foreigners" (Rammohun's *English Works* ed. by Nag and Burman, Part IV, pp. 70, 71-72). No vindication of India's past wisdom or the Sanskrit language could have been more spirited and outspoken.

In an undated piece of composition (a humorous dialogue, written apparently in a mood of relaxation during his stay in England but not included in any of the extant *Collections* of his English writings) entitled *On the possibility, practicability and expediency of substituting the Bengali Language for the English*, Rammohun further eulogises Sanskrit as "one of the purest and most regularly formed languages in the world". The piece has been collected and published by Mr. Brajendranath Banerji in the *Modern Review* for December 1928, pp. 635-36.

In his letter to Lord Amherst, Rammohun clearly dropped a hint that *if the British authorities were bent upon developing the study of Sanskrit, the purpose would be best served not by founding a college in Calcutta, but by making liberal money grants to the large number of tols and chatuspāthis run by the learned paṇḍits in different parts of the country.* For an account of these "indigenous schools of learning" in existence in Bengal and some parts of Bihar in the third decade of the nineteenth century see William Adam's *Report on the State of Education in Bengal (1835 and 1838)* edited by Anathnath Basu, (University of Calcutta, 1941), pp. 16-23, 50-51, 57-58, 70-72, 73, 75-82, 85, 86, 92, 95-96, 103-04, 106-07, 112-14, 119-22, 166-84, 253-77.

## CHAPTER VI

( 1826-1828 )

### FOUNDING THE BRAHMO SAMAJ

1826. Vedānta College built.

1827. *Divine Worship by means of the Gāyatrī*. Aug. 3.—English Unitarian services recommenced. *Why do you frequent a Unitarian place of Worship?* Nov.—Adam's Evening Lectures for the Natives. Dec. 30—British Indian Unitarian Association formed.

1828. Feb.—Adam proposes an Auxiliary of Hindu Unitarians. Dev's suggestion to hold Hindu services. English Unitarian services given up. Adam resigns.—March—Lord Amherst leaves India. July—Lord William Bentinck arrives at Calcutta as Governor-General. Aug. 18—Letter on Trial by Jury. Aug. 20—First Meeting of the Brahmo Samaj.

We now enter in the most distinctive period of Rammohun's crowded career. What has already transpired has made it abundantly evident that he was above all and beneath all a religious personality. The many and far-reaching ramifications of his prolific energy were forth-puttings of one purpose. The root of his life was religion. He would never have been able to go so far or to move his countrymen so mightily as he did but for the driving power of an intense Theistic passion. The years in which he stands out as the founder of a distinct religious community must therefore be regarded as the most characteristic epoch in his history.

It is fortunate for us that just at the opening



of this period we have an authoritative statement of Rammohun's attitude to the two great historic faiths between which he stood. In a letter to Dr. Tuckerman, dated February 18-20, 1826, Mr. William Adam thus explains the Reformer's relation to Hinduism and Christianity,—an explanation which, it will be seen, Rammohun himself endorsed :

Mr. Tuppin in one of his letters asks—Does Rammohun Roy profess to be a Christian ?.. ...I find it difficult to give a definite answer to this question, but the nearest approach to the truth, although I hope and believe that it is not the truth itself, would perhaps be to say that he is both a Christian and a Hindu,—Christian with Christians and a Hindu with Hindus. And before you say either that I am contradicting myself or that he is insincere in his religion, you must candidly weigh all the circumstances in which he is placed. In the first place then, his relinquishment of idolatry is absolute, total, public, uncompromising ; and when you reflect who he is and what he is, this is of itself an invincible test of integrity of religious principle and conduct. But his relinquishment of idolatry is not inconsistent with the retention of his Brahmanical rights, and observance of the rules of caste, the latter of which is necessary to the former and both are necessary to enable him to be useful to his countrymen,—the thing which he has most at heart. On the other hand although he may safely relinquish idolatry, he cannot safely profess Christianity. The profession would involve loss of caste, loss of property, loss of influence, loss of everything but a name ; and while he employs caste, property, influence, everything to promote, not the nominal profession merely, but the enlightened belief and salutary influences of Christianity, his claim to be a practical although not a nominal Christian would seem to be undoubted. In this point of view, Hinduism furnishes the antidote to its own inherent intolerance. There is another reason for the course he has pursued. The profession of Christianity would identify him in the opinion of Hindus not with the respectable and liberal portion of the Christian

population, but with the low, ignorant and depraved converts recently made by the English, or long since made by the Portuguese missionaries,—and in the opinion of Mussulmans who hold him in high esteem, with Trinitarians generally; for such Mussulmans suppose all Christians to be. In other words, the profession of Christianity would inevitably, in the present circumstances of this country, identify him with persons from whom he differs as widely as from those with whom he is now identified. He has, therefore, only a choice of evils, and he has hitherto chosen that which, although he groans under its bondage, leaves him greater liberty and usefulness than he could otherwise possess. I have thus given you the view of his circumstances and conduct which I have reason to suppose he would himself give you if he were now writing to you; and I have only further to add that.....I do not feel these reasons to be quite so convincing as they appear to him.....I have no doubt that in his opinion they possess all the force necessary fully to justify him in the sight of God and his own conscience in the course which he has pursued.<sup>1</sup>

Since writing the preceding paragraph, I have had an opportunity of showing it to Rammohun Roy, who considers it a correct representation of his feelings and sentiments.

In a later letter to Dr. Tuckerman, of date October 14, 1826, Mr. Adam remarks :

You, inquire whether Rammohun Roy is a Unitarian

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1. This long passage is an example of the narrowness of the outlook of Mr. Adam and the contemporary Unitarian Christians. To them it seems, there was no *via media* between the relinquishment of idol-worship and Christianity. The purest type of monism and monotheism preached by the *Vedānta* meant nothing to them. It is strange how even after their long and intimate association with Rammohun they repeatedly fell into the error of identifying the whole of Hinduism with idolatry. They could not reconcile themselves easily to the fact that Rammohun should give up idolatry and yet remain a good Hindu outside the pale of Christianity! Hence came their subsequent disappointment.—*Editors.*



Christian or only a Theist, and on this point I beg to refer you to my No. VI, which contains all the information I can give you respecting it....In addition to the particulars then given, he permits me now to say that failing the male heirs of his own body, of whom there are two, he has bequeathed the whole of his property to our Mission ; and while he regrets the appearance of ostentation which this statement may bear, he leaves it to yourself to judge whether he would have been likely to do so if he did not sincerely embrace the Christian religion and ardently desire to extend its blessings to his countrymen.<sup>2</sup>

To Dr. Tuckerman's inquiry concerning the rites of caste which Rammohun as a Brahman observed, Mr. Adam (June 24, 1827) answered :

All the rules in the present state of Hindu society he finds it necessary to observe, relate to eating and drinking. He must not eat of the food forbidden to Brahmins nor with persons of a different religion from the Hindu or of different caste or tribe from his own. This is the only remnant of the rules of caste to which he still adheres, and even this remnant I have reason to know he frequently but secretly disregards... Both in the marriages and deaths that happen within his domestic circle he rigidly abstains in his own person from every approach to the idolatrous rites usually practised on such occasions, although he does not prohibit the other members of his family from engaging in them if they think proper.

This compliance with the rules of caste must, one would think, have been extremely distasteful to Rammohun, inasmuch as he considered caste to be one of the gravest of the many ills under which his

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2. Mr. Adam was very soon disillusioned. The foundation of the Brahmo Samaj belied all his hopes. It will be seen that more than once during Rammohun's career, sincere but overzealous and high-strung Christian Missionaries, Trinitarian and Unitarian, have misunderstood and accordingly misrepresented him.—*Editors.*

country laboured. In a private letter written about this time ( January 18, 1828 ) he thus expresses himself :

I agree with you that in point of vices the Hindus are not worse than the generality of Christians in Europe and America ; but I regret to say that the present system of religion adhered to by the Hindus is not well calculated to promote their political interest<sup>3</sup>. The distinction of castes introducing innumerable divisions and sub-divisions among them has entirely deprived them of patriotic feeling, and the multitude of religious rites and ceremonies and the laws of purification have totally disqualified them from undertaking any difficult enterprise. . . . It is, I think, necessary that some change should take place in their religion, at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort. I fully agree with you that there is nothing so sublime as the precepts taught by Christ, and there is nothing equal to the simple doctrines he inculcated.

He goes on to deplore the way in which they were disregarded and distorted by Christians, but hopes for a change to be effected by the growing spirit of inquiry and humanity. It is said that Rammohun translated into Bengali a work called *Bastra Suchi* written by a Buddhist named Buddhaghosha opposing caste.<sup>4</sup> This is an interesting link

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3. Rammohun, it may be noted, had already publicly condemned the caste system in 1821, as one of the causes of India's national degradation. See, preface to the *Brahmanical Magazine* (English Works ed. by Nag and Burman, Part II pp. 137-38) ; also *Brahmaṇa Sevadhi* (Rammohun's *Collected Bengali Works* Sahitya Parishad Ed. No. 5, p. 4).—Editors.

4. The name of the book as given here, is incorrect. The correct form is *Vajra-Sūchī*. Its author is also not Buddhaghosha. The translation was published in 1827 (Rammohun's *Collected Bengali Works* Sahitya Parishad Ed. No. 4, pp. 45 – 48). The expression "it is said", and the incorrect statement of



of connection between the ancient and most famous movement for reforming Hinduism, and its modern successor, It illustrates anew Rammohun's readiness to borrow books or arguments from any religion, Mohammedan, Buddhist, or Christian, if only thereby he might purify Hinduism.

In a letter of introduction to Jeremy Bentham, of November 14, 1830, Mr. J. Young, whom some one called "his dearest friend in India," says of Rammohun :

He has externally maintained so much, and no more, of Hindoo custom as his profound knowledge of their sacred books enabled him to justify ; relaxing, however, little by little, yet never enough to justify his being 'out of the pale.' I need not say that in private it is otherwise, and that prejudices of all sorts are duly condemned by our philosopher.

His impartial attitude towards other faiths was not yet understood by his Unitarian allies. From many other passages in their letters partly cited above, it is pretty evident that both Mr. Adam and Dr. Tuckerman had convinced themselves that Rammohun accepted what they called "the Divine authority of our Lord." He certainly was very closely identified with the Unitarian Mission. The Unitarian services had, for the time, been given up ; as a consequence, we find Mr Adam writing of Rammohun, in February, 1826, "at present he does not attend anywhere," but expressing the confidence that as soon as Unitarian worship was resumed he would as before be among the most

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the names of the text and its author, show that the continuator had not seen the book. Rammohun mentions the name of the author as *Mrityunjayāchārya*. See Note I at the end of the Chapter.--*Editors*.

regular worshippers. From the letter of October 14, 1826 cited above, we learn that Rammohun had made provision in his will for Mr. Adam's family—a tribute to the cause as well as to the friendship of the Unitarian missionary. Earlier in the same year he had been “so much gratified by the perusal of the ‘One Hundred Arguments for the Unitarian Faith’,”—sent him by the American Unitarian Association—“that he caused an edition to be printed at his own Press for distribution in Calcutta.”\*

Along with Dwarakanath Thakur, Prasanna Coomar Thakur and Radhaprasad Roy, and six Englishmen he served on the Unitarian Committee. In the renewal of that Committee's activity in 1827 he had prominent share. On Mr. Adam (whose journalistic venture, the *Calcutta Chronicle*, was ruthlessly suppressed by the Government a few months later) resuming operations as missionary, Rammohun's son, Radhaprasad, offered a site adjoining the Anglo Hindu School for a native chapel and school. The cost of the proposed building was put at three or four thousand rupees which, Mr. Adam wrote (to Rev. W. J. Fox, August 1, 1827), “Rammohun Roy thinks he will be able to collect among his native friends.” Unitarians in Britain had despatched, some months previously, about 15,000 Rupees.† Pending the anticipated erection, the Committee rented the Hurkaru public rooms which were attached to the *Hurkaru* newspaper and library ; and there morning service was commenced

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\* Letter of William Adam to Rev. E. S. Gannett, Boston, U. S. A., August 3, 1826.

† So Rammohun states in his letter of February 2, 1827, to Dr. Estlin.



by Mr. Adam on Sunday, August 3, 1827. Thus began Rammohun's second attempt to find his church—his fellowship of worship and propaganda—under the auspices of Unitarian Christianity.

His literary activity revived about this time and in directions characteristic of it. "For a period of more than two years," he wrote to Mr. J. B. Estlin, February 7, 1827, "owing to the most afflict-ing circumstances arising from the hostile feelings of some individuals towards my family, I found myself totally unable to pursue any undertaking or carry on correspondence even with those whom I sincerely loved and revered." But his son's trial having ended satisfactorily in 1826, he managed to publish in the following year *A translation into English of a Sanskrit Tract inculcating the Divine Worship ; esteemed by those who believe in the revelation of the Veds as most appropriate to the nature of the Supreme Being*. This is really a commentary, partly composed of sayings of the sages, on "the *Gayutree*, the most sacred text of the Veds." The version given of that mystic formula reads, "We meditate on the cause of all, pervading all, and internally ruling all material objects, from the sun down to us and others." As though by way of offset to this excursion into the Vedic Scriptures, we find\* Rammohun engaged with Mr. Adam in translating the Sermon on the Mount into Sanskrit, the idea being eventually to turn the whole of the *Precepts of Jesus* into that language.

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\* From a letter of William Adam to W. J. Fox, September 10, 1827.

Towards the close of the year, he published a little tract entitled *Answer of a Hindu to the Question—“Why do you frequent a Unitarian place of worship instead of the numerous attended Established Churches?”* It bears the signature of Chandrasekhar Deb, a disciple of Rammohun; but, as Mr. Adam informed Dr. Tuckerman in a letter dated January 18, 1828, it was entirely Rammohun's own composition. Mr. Adam adds, “I regret that he continues to publish these things in the name of another, but I cannot succeed in dissuading him from it.” This persistent assumption of other people's names is indeed a puzzle. There seems to have been a secretive strain in Rammohun's blood, which made him favour this pseudonymous authorship. The *Answer* simply amounted to saying that in a Unitarian place of worship he heard nothing of Incarnation, Union of Two Natures, or Trinity,—doctrines which he regarded as only a variant of the anthropomorphic and polytheistic mythology of popular Hinduism.

But the Unitarian exotic did not thrive. Its roots would not strike. The English morning service begun in August was “very indifferently attended.”† From the first it “received little support from avowed Unitarians.” “Even a majority of the Committee regularly absented themselves.” An evening service was tried in November. It was attended at first by 60 to 80, but gradually “dwindled almost to nothing.”‡ Mr. Adam was surprised to find the native members of his Committee

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† Letter of Mr. Adam to Dr. Tuckerman, November 30, 1827.

‡ The same to the same, September 1, 1828.



stoutly opposed to the erection of a native Chapel for lectures in the native language. Their plea was that "anything said or written in the vernacular tongue will be degraded and despised in consequence of the medium through which it is conveyed." English, Persian and Sanskrit were the only languages which would secure respect.\* Mr. Adam endeavoured to console himself by a course of "familiar lectures on the First Principles of Religion" which he began in October "for the exclusive benefit of the natives...in the native part of the city"—in Rammohun's Anglo-Hindu School, in fact. His audiences at first ranged from 12 to 25. But even Rammohun did not attend, and in the end poor Mr. Adam was left "with scarcely a single individual to address."† Before things had reached this pass, he made gallant efforts to turn the tide. On the 30th of December, 1827, he got the Unitarian Committee to adopt a proposal which he drafted so long ago as May of the previous year,—to constitute themselves into "a more complete organization" to be known as "the British Indian Unitarian Association". This step was intended to deepen the local *esprit de corps* and bring members into closer touch with Unitarians in Great Britain and America. But the Sunday congregations went on declining. Then Mr. Adam, thinking it wise to give up the services before the attendance had become ridiculously small, proposed that he should be sent on a missionary journey to Madras. But the Committee refused consent, on Rammohun's repre-

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\* W. Adam to W. J. Fox. September 10, 1827.

† Letter to Dr. Tuckerman, September 1, 1828.

sentations chiefly, that the funds could not stand the cost and that Mr. Adam was indispensable to Calcutta.‡ There was no way out but to face failure and confess it. Mr. Adam had been baffled in all his plans. As we saw in our last chapter, he had tried to run the Anglo-Hindu School as a mission agency, but had been so frequently baulked by Rammohun's autocratic will as in the end to be compelled to resign all share in its management. His congregations both British and native had run down almost to zero. He accordingly requested the Committee to point out some other form of missionary service which would justify him in receiving the stipend which came to him from abroad for that purpose. The Committee saw no "fit mode in which Mr. Adam can employ himself as a Unitarian missionary," and could therefore no longer disburse the stipend referred to. Poor Mr. Adam retired heartbroken.§ This decisive act seems to have taken place in the first half of 1828.||

We are now brought to the verge of the foundation of the Brahmo Samaj. We have described Mr. Adam's futile endeavours somewhat fully, because it was upon the ruins of the Unitarian Mission that the new Theistic Church was reared. Between the two movements there was the

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‡ W. Adam to Dr. Tuckerman, January 9, 1828.

§ W. Adam to Dr. Tuckerman September 1, 1828.

||. In a letter to Dr. Tuckerman dated April 2, 1828, Mr. Adam says that the native service has been discontinued 'lately' and that he has called a meeting of the Committee for the next day (April 3) to consider the state of the English service.



most direct connection. Religious beginnings are often lost in obscurity, but not so in this case. There are two accounts of the origin of the Brahmo Samaj, distinct and independent, but quite harmonious.

The popular and best known may be given first.\* “In those days a newspaper was published, named the *Harkara*. In the office of the *Harkara* the Rev. Mr. Adam had established an association under the name of the Unitarian Society...One day at the close of worship, Rammohun Roy with his disciples was returning from the *Harkara* office. On the road Tarachand Chakravarti and Chandrasekhar Dev said, ‘What need is there for us to go to the prayer-house of strangers to perform our worship? We ought to erect a house of our own in which to worship one God.’ This proposal was the first germ of the Brahmo Samaj. The proposer, Chandrasekhar Dev, is now† living.”

When this event happened we have no precise indication. It could scarcely have occurred before or during the time when Rammohun was actively organizing the British Indian Unitarian

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\* The following is taken from “Little Stories about Rammohun Roy”, (second part), from the *Tattvabodhini* No. 445, Bhādra, 1802 (Śaka Era) p. 94. The recounter, Babu Rajnarayan Bose whose father was a disciple and coadjutor of Rammohun Roy, states that he gave Kisorichand Mitra for his life of Rammohun, which appeared thirty-six years previously in the *Calcutta Review*, “these anecdotes and others taken from the lips of my father.”

† 1879.

Association (December 30, 1827).<sup>5</sup> It probably took place in the early part of 1828, when the Unitarian congregations were fast dwindling away. Whenever it was made, the suggestion at once impressed Rammohun. He consulted his comrades, Dwarkanath Thakur and Roy Kalinath Munshi. On their approving the idea, he called a meeting at his house, when these and other friends, including Prasannakumar Thakur and Mathuranath Mullick agreed to carry it out. A site at Simla in Calcutta was first thought of, but subsequently abandoned; and until a suitable place could be found and building erected, it was decided to hire a house belonging to Kamal-lochan Bose, at Jorasanko, in the Chitpore Road, and there commence public worship.‡

The other account makes Mr. Adam the proximate initiator of the Samaj. It is given in his letters, written while the new movement was in its earliest stages. In a letter to Mr. John Bowring, London, under date, February 5, 1828, he writes :

I must add before I conclude, that I am endeavouring to

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5. The great importance of Rammohun's endeavours in this respect, has been recognized by subsequent writers of Europe and America. It was due to Rammohun's influence that the *British and Foreign Unitarian Association* came to be formed in England. The adoption of the word 'foreign' and the omission of the word 'Christian' in the name, are of the greatest significance. See the summary of the article by Moncure Daniel Conway in the *Chicago Open Court* 1894, reproduced in the *Father of Modern India* (Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume) Part II pp. 166-167.—Editors.

‡ So Leonard in his *History of the Brahmo Samaj*, pp. 36, 37.



get the Hindu Unitarians in Calcutta to unite in forming an Association auxiliary to the British Indian [Unitarian] Association, and for the establishment of the public worship of the One God among themselves, for the printing of tracts and for the diffusion of religious knowledge generally among their countrymen. To prevent prejudice from being excited, it will be necessary to keep Christianity out of view at present in connection with this auxiliary, but it will really be (what it perhaps may not be *nominally*) an auxiliary to our views, and a highly valuable one, too, if I can succeed in creating the necessary degree of interest to begin and carry it on.

On April 2, of the same year, he writes to Dr. Tuckerman, announcing the discontinuance of the native service, and remarking,—

Since then I have been using every endeavour in my power to induce Hindu Unitarians to unite among themselves for the promotion of our common objects, and I am not without hopes of succeeding, although I have a great deal of apathy to struggle against.

On January 22, 1829, writing to Dr. Tuckerman, he recalls the fact that “one of the resolutions”—presumably passed in connection with the formation of the British Indian Unitarian Association—had invited all Unitarians, whether Christian or Hindu, to form themselves into Associations, etc., and proceeds,—

There has accordingly been formed a Hindu Unitarian Association, the object of which is, however, strictly Hindu and not Christian, *i.e.*, to teach and practise the worship of One Only God on the basis of the divine authority of the Ved, and not of the Christian Scriptures. This is a basis of which I have distinctly informed Rammohun and my other native friends that I cannot approve.

But he has, he says, encouraged them to go forward, as he considers it “a step towards

Christianity," and thinks that "the friendly feeling which . . happily exists between Christian and Hindu Unitarians should be preserved." He has, therefore, recommended his Committee to make a grant of 500 rupees to the Hindu Association, and has himself occasionally attended their services. This "Hindu Association" is, of course, the Brahmo Samaj.

There is no discrepancy between the two narratives. The idea may have arisen quite spontaneously without as well as within the circle of Hindu reformers. From the "great deal of apathy," indeed, which Mr. Adam complains of on April 2, it would seem that Chandrasekhar Dev had not then made the suggestion on which Rammohun acted so eagerly. And from this it would follow that Mr. Adam really originated the idea, Rammohun having had it pressed on his notice since the beginning of February. The Hindu may have hung back until the project was broached by his own followers and their readiness to take action thereby attested. But, even if Mr. Adam can claim the credit of first suggesting the distinct organization for worship, we must remember that he was only a secondary agency.<sup>6</sup> He and all his associations were spiritually begotten by Rammohun Roy. And the Brahmo Samaj was but the last development of a series of tentative social efforts which reached back to the very beginning of Rammohun's reforming career. Even when at Rangpur

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6. Mr. Adam and Rammohun Roy differed fundamentally in their attitudes towards the *Brahmo Samaj*. See Note III at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors*.



(1809—1814)<sup>7</sup> he held meetings for religious discussion. In 1815 he founded the Atmiya Sabha and kept it going month by month until 1819. After that he still continued lecturing to a private circle of friends and followers. In 1821 he converted Adam from Trinitarianism and organized with him the Unitarian Committee. He had assisted in its resuscitation and re-organization in 1827. And now the group of comrades and disciples which had hung around him these many years were at last ready to form an independent community, no longer for dialectical or educational purposes only, but for worship,—for distinctly religious fellowship. The share which Unitarianism had in the birth of the Brahmo Samaj was distinctly maieutic not maternal.

The great commencement took place on Wednesday, the 20th of August, 1828. Then the native Theistic Church of modern India was born. It was at first called simply *Brahma Sabha*,—the Society of God.<sup>8</sup> The inaugural preacher was Ramchandra Śarmā.<sup>9</sup> His discourse was upon the spiritual worship of God.<sup>10</sup> His text, which was

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7. Should be 1809-1815.—*Editors.*

8. At the time of its foundation Rammohun Roy gave his Theistic Church, the name of *Brahmo Samaj*. It is however true that occasionally the new institution was also referred to as *Brahma Sabhā*. See Note II at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*

9. Ramchandra Vidyāvāgis, younger brother of Rammohun's venerable *Sannyāsī* associate Hariharananda Trīthasvāmī.—*Editors.*

10. For the facsimile of the title page of the Bengali sermon which was circulated in print, see Plate VII.—*Editors.*

taken from various parts of the Hindu Scriptures, read, "God is One only without an equal, in Whom abide all worlds and their inhabitants. Thus he who mentally perceives the Supreme Spirit in all creatures, acquires perfect equanimity, and shall be absorbed into the highest essence, even into the Almighty." All worship, whether of natural objects, images, persons, was directly or indirectly worship of the Supreme ; but direct worship was the most excellent. Its superior excellence was attested by revelation ("the Veds, the Institutes of Manu, and all Scriptures of acknowledged authority"), by reason, which discarded all outward ceremonies and found worship to consist in self-discipline, self-realization, and service of others, and by experience; for while indirect worshippers quarrelled with each other's partial views of God, the direct worshipper had quarrel with none, for he adored the One God whom they also under howsoever imperfect and differing forms actually adored.

This sermon was translated into English by Tarachand Chakravarti, and published. In sending copies to a friend named Captain A. Froyer (November 19), Rammohun spoke of it as "exhibiting the simplicity, comprehensiveness and tolerance which distinguish the religious belief and worship formerly adopted by one of the most ancient nations on earth and still adhered to by the more enlightened portion of their posterity."

Mr. Adam thus describes (to Dr. Tuckerman, January 22, 1829) the order of their weekly meeting, which was usually held on a Saturday evening, between seven and nine ;



The service begins with two or three of the Pandits singing, or rather *chanting* in the cathedral style, some of the spiritual portions of the Ved, which are next explained in the vernacular dialect to the people by another Pandit. This is followed by a discourse in Bengali...and the whole is concluded by hymns both in Sanskrit and Bengali, sung with the voice and accompanied by instrumental music, which is also occasionally interposed between other parts of the service. The audience consists generally of from 50 to 60 individuals, several Pandits, a good many Brahmins, and all decent and attentive in their demeanour.

The *Calcutta John Bull*, of August 23, 1828, in reporting the opening ceremony in somewhat similar terms observes that in delivering the sermon the officiating minister lectured "from a separate room, that the Veds may not be desecrated by being in the same apartment with the *profanum vulgus* of hearers."<sup>11</sup> Two Telugu Brahmans were permanently secured for the recital of the Vedas. Utsavānanda Vidyāvāgis read from the Upanisads, and Ramchandra Vidyāvāgis explained them in Bengali. Tarachand Chakravarti was appointed the first secretary.

The new departure caused no little disappointment among European residents. The *John Bull* laments that the liberal Hindus have "from Unitarianism very naturally slid into pure Deism," and bewails the lost hope of Rammohun Roy becoming

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11. Nagendranath Chatterjee however quotes the indirect authority of Chandrasekhar Dev against this view (*Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rayer Jiban-charit* 5th ed. p. 314). The voice of Chandrasekhar Dev should carry some weight, in the present case, as he was one of the founders of the Samaj. See also the *Reformer* as quoted by the *Asiatic Journal*, January 1832, "Asiatic Intelligence—Calcutta" p. 13.—Editors.

the great agent in Christianizing India.<sup>12</sup> Even Mr. Adam's eyes were considerably opened. In the letter last cited he declares—

Rammohun Roy, I am persuaded, supports this institution, not because he believes in the divine authority of the Ved, but solely as an instrument for overthrowing idolatry. To be candid, however, I must add that the conviction has lately gained ground in my mind that he employs Unitarian Christianity in the same way, as an instrument for spreading pure and just notions of God, without believing in the divine authority of the Gospel.<sup>13</sup>

But, however unpopular with Europeans, the new departure made its way among the educated Hindus of Calcutta. The numbers in which they attended, and the rapid increase in the funds of the Society showed a marked contrast to the fate of the earlier efforts put forth by the Unitarian Committee. The Samaj had evidently come to stay. It was no exotic imported from abroad. However suggested, it was an indigenous product of the Hindu mind ; and it took root and grew.

As Rammohun and his band of disciples now stand out together as a distinct religious community, their mutual manner of life claims our attention. It was through these disciples that the work of the great reformer was carried on and made permanently fruitful ; they were the "living stones" which he shaped into a lasting edifice. Of

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12. *John Bull* October 16, 1830 in Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India*. No. 39, pp. 85-86 ; For the text of a letter under the signature of "A Christian", condemning the foundation of the Brahmo Samaj, *Ibid* p. 82.—Editors.

13. See Note III at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.



his relations to them we have only a few glimpses, but they are sufficient to set his work in a more genial and human light than that of the mere teacher or leader. We are told that he “always displayed much affection towards his disciples.” In addressing any one of them he habitually said *Beradar*,—the Persian word for brother. They, however, usually addressed him as *Dewanji*, the title of respect borne by the collector.<sup>14</sup> Nor did he limit this fraternal appellation to his own following. He used it to all whom he met. And the brotherhood he believed in was no mere matter of names. It was oriental in its warmth of demonstrativeness. It was western in its equal freedom. It is said that “if any cause of joy arose he immediately embraced his followers.” And he was not above receiving kindly words of rebuke from them, as we shall see later.

Rammohun made no secret of the strong Theistic passion which ruled his life. A favourite disciple remarked that whenever he spoke of the Universal Theism, to the advocacy of which he had devoted himself, he was moved even to tears.\* Hearing of a man who from Deist turned Atheist, Rammohun rejoined, “And later he will become a

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\* Babu Nagendranath Chatterjee, in a letter of January 2, 1883, states that Babu Nandakishore, Bose, favourite disciple of Rammohun Roy, told his son Babu Rajnarayan Bose, that “his religion, was Universal Theism. Whenever he spoke of this Universal religion, he was so much moved that tears came out from his eyes”. (See also Rajnarayan Bose’s Bengali autobiography entitled *Atmcharit* Second Ed., Calcutta 1912, p. 30 ; and Nagendranath Chatterjee *Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rayer Jibancharit* 5th. Ed. pp. 613-14.—Editors).

14. The term “collector” is misleading in the context. See above, pp. 41-42.—Editors.

beast.” Yet intense as was his religious zeal and his aversion to disbelievers in Deity, he could tolerate men of sceptical opinions even among his intimate friends. “Babu Prasanna Coomar Thakur, had a great affection for Rammohun Roy and for the Brahmo Samaj, but he was a sceptic. For this reason Rammohun Roy, called him a rustic philosopher.† Hume and the French school of deniers were known *urbi et orbi* ; Babu Prasanna Coomar Thakur was a sort of country cousin aping the cut of their philosophic habit. Thus the master would banter and condemn, without alienating an unbelieving disciple.

“When not engaged in benevolent works,” says Babu Anandachandra Bose, “he was constantly advising his disciples.” One disciple smitten with a fair Rachel had had palmed upon him an ill-favoured Leah. Naturally wroth with his father-in-law, he was about to avenge himself for the deception by taking another wife. Rammohun dissuaded him. “The tree which bears excellent fruit is beautiful,” said he. “If your wife bears you a fine child, you must consider her to be in all respects beautiful.” The anecdotist adds that, as it actually turned out, “the sons of that disciple were the most forward in promoting widow marriage and all the most excellent features in Rammohun Roy’s beloved work in the Brahmo Samaj.”<sup>15</sup>

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† Babu Rajnarayan Bose’s “Little Stories” in *Tattvabodhini*, Nos. 444 and 445 (Śrāvana and Bhādra, 1802 Śaka, pp. 73-77 and pp. 93-99 respectively).

15. This disciple of Rammohun was Nandakishore Bose, the father of Rajnarayan Bose. The latter was a distinguished leader of the Brahmo Samaj and a leading figure of the



Like many other religious reformers, Rammohun introduced changes in dress. He adopted the costume of the Musulmans. "He directed that a closely twisted turban should be worn instead of a loose one, and a *choga* instead of a skirt. He tried zealously to keep this style of dress in fashion"\* He made it a rule for himself and his disciples always to wear it when attending the Samaj. He was very particular about the observance of this rule. He asked a friend to reprove a disciple who had come to worship in his office clothes,—the ordinary *dhuti* and *chadar*.<sup>16</sup> He held that "handsome apparel should be worn in God's *darbar*." He was very careful in other ways to show respect to the act of Divine service. Thus he would never go to the Samaj save on foot; he only returned in his carriage. He did not usually reprimand a faulty follower, but when it was no longer a case of minor transgression but an offence of a serious nature, he did not hesitate to exercise discipline. "For excess

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nineteenth century Bengali renaissance. So we may take it that Rammohun's prophecy was ultimately fulfilled.—Editors.

\* Nagendranath Chattarjee in a speech at the commemoration of Rammohun Roy, January, 1879.

16. This disciple was Dwarakanath Tagore. The entire incident has been narrated by Maharshi Devendranath Tagore (Dwarakanath's eldest son) in his *Reminiscences of Rammohun Roy* (being the report of a conversation with some friends held in September, 1896) published in the *Queen*, September 28, 1896, and reprinted in *The Father of Modern India* (Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume) Part II pp. 172-77; for a Bengali translation of the same, see Chatterjee *Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rayer Jiban-Charit* 5th Ed. pp. 729-39.—Editors.

in drinking he has refused to see the offender for six months. Thus the disciple was corrected.”†

“Rammohun could not,” as has been observed, “rebuke his followers for ordinary faults, But if he committed a fault himself, and a disciple reproved him, he received the rebuke with great gentleness. According to the custom of the time, Rammohun Roy wore long hair. After his bath he was somewhat long in dressing. Observing this his plain spoken disciple, Tarachand Chakravarti, quoted the first line of a song running, ‘How much longer will you please yourself studying your face in the glass?’<sup>17</sup> and added. ‘Is this song only for other people, Mahashoi?’ Confounded, Rammohun Roy replied, ‘Ha ! brother, you are quite right’.<sup>18</sup>

Of the daily habits of the master, the following interesting account is furnished by Mr. G. N. Tagore, ‡ on the authority of his father who was an intimate friend and disciple :

Rammohun Roy was an early riser, and regularly took his morning walk. He used to oil his body every morning before bathing. Two big fellows used to oil him and shampoo him. While engaged in this process he would read by rotation and day by day in parts, the Sanskrit grammar Moogdhabodha. After bath he would have his breakfast in the Indian fashion squatting on the ground surrounded by Indian utensils for food. His breakfast consisted of fish and rice and perhaps milk, too. He never took any meals between his morning and

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† Babu Rajnarayan Bose at the same meeting.

17. English rendering of the first line of a Bengali song *kata ar sukhe mukh dekhibe darpane* composed by Rammohun himself. See his *Brahma-Saṅgīt* in *Collected Bengali Works* Sahitya Parishad Ed. No. 4, p. 64.—Editors.

18. See *Tattvabodhini*, Bhādra, 1802 Śaka, p. 98.—Editors.

‡ In a letter to the Author.



evening meal. He generally used to work till two and then go out and see his European friends in the afternoon. His evening meal was between seven and eight and that was in the English fashion but the dishes were Mohammedan dishes, *Pilalu*, *Kopta*, *Korma*, etc.

He never went out without his shawl turban,—not like the present Bengalis with a French smoking cap. When at home he was always dressed in the Mohammedan fashion, *Chapkan*, *Ungaga*, *Pyjamas*, and a skull cap on his head. He never sat bareheaded, following in this instance the Mohammedan custom. He never gave up his Brahmanical thread. His spoken Bengali was highly classified in structure. His English was good, but he spoke with great hesitancy lest he should commit some verbal error or other.

Another and slightly different account of Rammohun's day is gathered by a friend of the author, R. D. H.,<sup>19</sup> from conversation with Ramhari Das, "the old and faithful servant of Rammohun Roy," at Burdwan in 1863 :

He used to rise very early, about 4 A.M., to take coffee, and then to have his morning walk, accompanied by a few persons. He would generally return home before sunrise, and when engaged in morning duties Golokdas Napit would read to him newspapers of the day. Tea would follow ; gymnastics ; after resting a little he would attend to correspondence ; then have his daily bath ; breakfast at 10 A.M. ; hearing newspapers read ; an hour's siesta on the bare top of a table ; getting up he would pass his time either in conversation or in making visits. Tiffin at 3 P.M. ; dessert 5 P.M. Evening walk ; supper at 10 P.M. He would sit up to midnight conversing with friends. He would then retire to bed again eating his favourite cake, which he called "Halila". When engaged in writing he would be alone.

If no man is a hero to his valet, just as little should we expect a man to be a saint to his cook.


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19. Apparently Rakhal Das Haldar.—*Editors*.

পরমেশ্বরের

উপাসনা বিষয়ে প্রথম ব্যাখ্যান

শ্রীরামচন্দ্র শর্মা কর্তৃক



ব্রাহ্ম সমাজ

কলিকাতা

বুধবার ৬ ভাদ্র

শকাব্দ

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VII Title-page of *Paramesvarer Upasana Vishaye Pratham Vyakhyan*, the first sermon delivered at the Brahmo Samaj by Ramchandra Vidyavagis, 20 August, 1828

From the collection of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad





Yet Rammohun's cook who accompanied his master to England and knew him in his decadence as well as in his prime, bore witness to his punctual piety : "The worship of God was Rammohun Roy's first daily work."<sup>20</sup>

A pretty little incident is preserved by Babu Rajnarayan Bose\* who had it from his father which sets the dignified Brahman in a new and attractive light.

Rammohun Roy was one morning walking in Bow Bazar. He perceived a vegetable-seller looking in vain for some one to place his load of vegetables on his head. Although dressed in nice clothing Rammohun Roy did not hesitate to place the basket on the man's head. Many gentlemen walk in the early morning in handsome garments, but how many among them would show their benevolence by an act of this kind ?<sup>21</sup>

It was in this circle of disciples that "The Hymns of Rammohun Roy" were mostly born. He lacked not, it seems, "the accomplishment of verse." He had cherished ambitions as a poet, but as he playfully remarked, Bharat Chandra's achievements in Bengali poetry were such as forbade any competition.<sup>22</sup> But he did not shrink from employing the still plastic Bengali as the metrical vehicle of his religious life. All the hymns in the volume quoted above except those marked by author's initials, are from his pen. By those who know the language they

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\* In a letter to the Author.

20. See *Tattvabodhinī* for Śrāvaṇa, 1802 Śaka, p. 77.  
—Editors.

21. See *Tattvabodhinī* for Bhādra, 1802 Śaka, p. 96.  
—Editors.

22. See *Tattvabodhinī* for Śrāvaṇa 1802 Śaka, p. 74.  
—Editors.





A Thing that surpasses speech,  
 How can it be described in words ?  
 Of Him the Universe is a Shadow :  
 He is without likeness as the Scriptures declare :  
 Where can we find His likeness ?  
 If thou wouldst know, meditate with singleness of mind.  
 Then thou shalt attain true knowledge, and shalt be free  
 from error.  
 I know no other way.<sup>23</sup>

The spirit of sacred song extended from the master to the disciples. They brought him their verses, and when the hymn pleased him, he would reward the author with a joyous embrace. Several of their compositions are included in his collection, where they are distinguished from his by appended initials.

Of the founder at the close of this memorable epoch an interesting picture is presented by Col.

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23. The book of spiritual and devotional hymns containing the compositions of Rammohun and his disciples was published in 1828 under the title *Brahmasaṅgīt*. Of the three songs mentioned here the first two are respectively, the English renderings of Rammohun's *mane kara śesher sedin bhayaṅkar* and *bhāva sei eke*. The third however is not the composition of Rammohun. Its Bengali original *vachana atīta yāhā kaye ki bujhāna yāya* is initialled Ni. Gho. in the *Brahmasaṅgīt*. See *Collected Bengali and Sanskrit Works* of Rammohun, edited by Rajnarayan Bose and Anandachandra Vedāntavāgis, Calcutta 1880, p. 506. According to the editors the initials stand for the name of the composer Nilmani Ghosh (*Ibid* p. 810). The text of the *Brahmasaṅgīt* in the Sāhitya Parishad Edition of Rammohun's *Collected Bengali Works*—4, pp.57-64, drops the initialled compositions of Rammohun's friends and is an exclusive collection of Rammohun's own songs—*Editors*.



Young, who writes from intimate personal knowledge, in a letter dated Calcutta, September 30, 1828, to Jeremy Bentham. It gives quite another aspect of these eventful years. This is what the Colonel says :

His whole time almost has been occupied for the last two years in defending himself and his son against bitter and vindictive persecution which has been got up against the latter nominally, but against himself and his abhorred free opinions in reality—by a conspiracy of his own bigoted countrymen, protected and encouraged, not to say instigated, by some of ours—influential and official men who cannot endure that a presumptuous “black” should tread so closely upon the heels of the dominant white class, or rather, should *pass* them in the march of mind. Rammohun Roy, after an arduous and prolonged battle through gradations of tribunals, has at length by dint of talent, perseverance, right, got the better in the last resort ; but the strife and magnitude of the stake and the long despairs of justice have shattered his nerves and bodily health and his energies of mind. It is now over\* and I hope most fervently that he will recover himself again. Not only has he no *equal* here among his countrymen, but he has none that at all approach to equality, even among the little “sacred squadron” of disciples whom he is slowly and gradually gathering around him in despite of obstacles...But he perseveres, and does make a distinct and visible progress, slow as it is—very slow. It must increase in geometrical ratio if he is only spared long enough to organize the element he is gathering together of resistance to superstition and fanaticism.

It is strange that such a man should be looked upon coldly, not to say disliked, by the mass of Europeans,—for he is greatly attached to us and our *regime*. Not that he loves our churches, or priests, or lawyers, or politicians, but because he

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\* i. e. The case against the son. The case against the father was only settled in Nov. 10, 1831. (Should be Nov. 10, 1830.—*Editors*).

considers the contact of our superior race<sup>24</sup> with his degraded and inferior countrymen as the only means and chance they have of improving themselves in knowledge and energy.

One regrets to record this indictment of Anglo-Indian sentiment, all the more that it is so well substantiated. The native champion of English civilization deserved better treatment from our countrymen.

The ominous reference to Rammohun's health will not escape the reader's notice.<sup>25</sup>

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24. This seems a somewhat wishful interpretation of Rammohun's views. Though a great admirer of Western civilization Rammohun was never a believer in the inherent superiority of Europeans over Asiatics. His writings contain enough evidence of this. See Note IV at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*

25. It is clear that Rammohun overstrained himself during the fifteen years from 1815 to 1830. He had to face serious and militant opposition to his religious and philanthropic activities. His relatives and powerful enemies like the Maharaja of Burdwan brought law-suits in the court to ruin him. His son was the victim of a conspiracy. His wife died broken-hearted. There were plots to assassinate him. In the midst of all these troubles, he did not waver but went on calmly and fearlessly with the self-imposed task of liberating his countrymen from the shackles of superstition and ignorance. All this was too much even for an iron constitution like his. There are allusions to a serious breakdown in his health in contemporary accounts. A "severe bodily indisposition" prevented him from attending a meeting of the Calcutta Unitarian Mission held in December 1827 (cf. *Bengal Hurkara* quoted by *John Bull*, January 3, 1828, Majumdar. *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 33, p. 79). The reference to his serious illness in Radhaprasad Roy's petition to Lord William Bentinck dated July 23, 1828, which was accompanied by a certificate from Dr. Alexandar Halliday, Rammohun's medical attendant, is another notable instance (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* p. 519).—*Editors.*



## SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

### I

The continuator's ignorance of Bengali and Sanskrit is perhaps responsible for the substitution of the incorrect spelling *Vastra Suchi* for the correct title *Vajrasūchī*. But the discrepancy with regard to the name of the author, is not easy to explain. Rammohun calls him Mrityunjayāchārya whereas the continuator mentions him as Buddhaghosha.

There are two works in Sanskrit literature bearing the name *Vajrasūchī* viz. (i) *Vajrasūchī* or *Vajrasuchīkā* (which is ranked as an *Upanishad*); (ii) *Vajrasūchī* ascribed to the great Buddhist poet and savant Aśvaghosha. The authorship of the *Vajrasūchikopānishad* is unknown but some scholars believe that the *Vajrasūchī* of Aśvaghosha was inspired partly by the *Upanishad* of the same name (B. C. Law *Aśvaghosha*, Memoir, Asiatic Society of Bengal, p. 9). It is certainly true that the content of Aśvaghosha's work is an elaboration of that of the *Vajrasūchikopānishad*.

It should be remembered that Rammohun translated the *Vajrasūchī Upanishad* and not the work of Aśvaghosha. As to the name Mrityunjayāchārya mentioned by Rammohun, it can not be explained. We do not know anything about the author of the *Upanishad*. He might or might not have been identical with Aśvaghosha, the author of the second text referred to, above. According to the Buddhist traditions of China and Tibet, Aśvaghosha possessed a number of epithets. One scholar even goes so far as to think that the name Aśvaghosha in Buddhist tradition stood for a personification of Kāla, or a form of Śiva (B. C. Law. *Aśvaghosha* p. 3). It is not possible to say in the present state of our knowledge whether Mrityunjaya or Mrityunjayāchārya is one of the forgotten epithets of the Buddhist sage Aśvaghosha. It may be the case however that the continuator who had no acquaintance with the original text or Rammohun's Bengali translation of the *Vajrasūchī Upanishad*, heard the name Aśvaghosha in this connection and erroneously reproduced it as Buddhaghosha.

The two works known as *Vajrasūchi* have been critically edited with notes and English translation by Sj Sujitkumar Mukhopadhyaya and published by the Sino-Indian Cultural Association, Santiniketan, in 1950. For a detailed discussion of Aśvaghosha's *Vajrasūchi*, see also Burnouf *Introduction à l'histoire du Bouddhisme Indien* Paris, 1844, pp. 215-17. A comparison of the texts of the *Vajrasūchi Upanishad* as given by Rammohun (vide his *Collected Bengali Works* Sāhitya Parishad Edition--4, pp. 45-46) and Sj Mukhopadhyaya (vide his edition, pp. 41-43), shows that though these agree in all essential points, there are certain differences in language between them. It is a pity that Sj Mukhopadhyaya makes no reference to Rammohun's pioneer work in the learned introduction to his own edition. At present the Bengali translation of the *Vajrasūchi Upanishad* constitutes the single extant specimen of Rammohun's acquaintance with Buddhism. It is important to remember in this connection that he mentioned to Rev. Alexander Duff of having read the Buddhist *Tripiṭaka* (George Smith *Life of Alexander Duff* Vol. I London 1879, p. 117).

## II

In deciding whether the Theistic Church of India was originally named *Brāhmo Samāj* (the name it bears at present) or *Brahma Sabhā*, our aim should be to find out what Rammohun Roy, the founder, called it when he laid its foundation. Fortunately we have direct evidence to show that *Brāhmo Samāj* the current anglicized spelling of the correct form *Brāhma Samāj*, has been the official designation of the church, since its inception. The church was launched into its eventful career on the 20th August 1828 (the 6th of *Bhādra*, 1750 Śaka). On the title page of the printed edition of the first sermon delivered in the church on the opening day by Pandit Ramchandra Vidyāvāgis, we find the name as "*Brāhma Samāj*" (ব্রাহ্মসমাজ/কলিকাতা/বুধবার ৬ ভাদ্র/শকাব্দ/১৭৫০—see Plate VII.) Further, in the deed of sale of a plot of land for the erection of the own building of the church, executed



on the 6th June, 1829, the name is definitely given as *Brahma Samāj* (ব্রহ্মসমাজ) and not as *Brahma Sabhā*. The said deed of sale has been printed in Nagendranath Chatterjee's *Raja Rammohun Rayer Jiban-Charit* 5th Ed. pp. 304-07. This reference in an official document conclusively proves that the original name given to the institution by Rammohun Roy, Dwarakanath Tagore, Kalinath Roy, Prasanna Kumar Tagore and Ramchandra Vidyāvāgis, who are mentioned in the same deed as the purchasers of the plot of land, was *Brāhmo Samāj* and not *Brahma Sabhā*. The name *Brahma Samāj* (ব্রহ্মসমাজ) is only a variant of *Brāhmo Samāj*. Rammohun himself is found to use the name *Brāhmo Samāj* in a Bengali letter, dated London, September 22, 1832, written to his son Radha-prasad Roy where he distinctly says : “এই অবকাশে ব্রাহ্মসমাজের কাজের নিমিত্ত এক গীত পাঠাইতেছি...” (cf. Plate VIII). In an official notice of the church announcing a meeting to celebrate “the rejection of the Suttee appeal by the Privy Council” signed by Baikunthanath Roy, Ramanath Tagore and Radha-prasad Roy and published in the *Samāchār Darpan*, November 10, 1832 the name is given as *Brūhmah Samāj* (ব্রাহ্মসমাজ) (J. K. Majumdar, *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 117, pp. 199-200). The institution is also referred to in the same name by contemporary papers like the *Samāchār Darpan* and the *Gyananweshun*, in the same year (*Ibid* pp. 210, 214 etc.) People in general and contemporary papers might occasionally have also called it *Brahma Sabhā*, but the official name as selected and given by the founder and his associates, was beyond any doubt *Brāhmo Samāj* (sometimes pronounced by contemporaries also as *Brahma Samāj* ব্রহ্মসমাজ). (See in this connection the Bengali *Autobiography of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore*. 3rd edition, edited by Satishchandra Chakravarti, Viśvabharati, 1927, Appendix XXIII. pp. 360-66).

It should also be noted that the term “*Brāhma*” or “*Brāhmya*” (ব্রাহ্ম or ব্রাহ্ম্য) had been in use in the progressive circle led by Rammohun, as a designation of the worshippers of Brahman or the Absolute long before the foundation of the *Brāhmo Samāj*. Rammohun uses it at least *four times* in his Bengali writings. (See introduction to the Bengali translation



Handwritten text in Bengali script, likely a letter. The text is written in a cursive style and is arranged in several lines. The handwriting is somewhat faded and the paper appears aged. The text is written in Bengali script, likely a letter. The text is written in a cursive style and is arranged in several lines. The handwriting is somewhat faded and the paper appears aged. The text is written in Bengali script, likely a letter. The text is written in a cursive style and is arranged in several lines. The handwriting is somewhat faded and the paper appears aged.

VIII Rammohun's letter from England to his son Radhaprosad Roy  
22 September, 1832

From a photograph lent by Sri Amal Home





of the *Māṇḍukya Upanishad* in *Collected Bengali Works Sāhitya Parishad* Ed. No. 1, p. 243 ; *Kabitākārer Sahit Vichār*,—*Ibid* No. 2, pp. 73, 75 ; and *Pathyapradān*, *Ibid*—6, p. 85), Hariharananda Tirthasvāmī, Rammohun's ascetic inspirer, also uses it to describe the members of Rammohun's group ("Brāhmyu or Unitarian Hindoo Community") in his famous letter dated March 27, 1818, addressed to the editor, *India Gazette*, condemning the practice of Satī (J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 56, p. 113). Even some of Rammohun's orthodox opponents are found to employ it as a term of reproach to indicate the progressive monotheists (cf. Kashinath Tarkapanchānan in his *Pāshaṇḍa-Piḍana* printed in Rammohun's *Collected Bengali Works Sāhitya Parishad* Ed. No. 6, p. 56) ! The new church of Rammohun thus naturally enough, acquired the name of *Brāhma Samāj* or *Brāhmya Samāj* (ব্রাহ্মসমাজ, ব্রাহ্ম্যসমাজ) meaning "an association of Brāhmas or worshippers of Brahman," from its very inception. The current anglicized spelling of this original official name is *Brāhmo Samāj*. It may in this connection be pointed out that the *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*, a *Tantra* text of comparatively recent origin, held in high esteem by both Hariharananda Tirthasvāmī and Rammohun Roy, uses the term *Brāhma* or *Brāhmya* (ব্রাহ্ম or ব্রাহ্ম্য) as the designation of members of the *Tattvachakra*, an intimate body of *Tāntric* worshippers of Brahman (cf. *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* VIII. 206-207, Vaṅgavāsi Edition, p. 85). It is possible that Rammohun was influenced to a certain extent by this *Tāntric* precedent in the matter of naming his new church.

It should however be remembered that while the *Brāhmo Samāj* remained the official name of the church, the contemporary press and public also referred to it frequently as *Brahma Sabhā* (ব্রহ্মসভা) (cf. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* Nos. 40, 43, 44 and 45, pp. 86-87, 90-93). In fact during the first few years in the history of the church the two names were used synonymously and the users hardly ever made any fine distinction of meaning between them.



[Diacritical marks have been specially used in this note to indicate the differences in pronunciation of the names, *Brāhmo Samāj* (ব্রাহ্মসমাজ), *Brahma Samāj* (ব্রহ্মসমাজ) and *Brahma Sabhā* (ব্রহ্মসভা).]

### III

It has appeared strange to many that Rammohun and William Adam should have to part company after a fairly long period of intimate personal friendship and close co-operation in public life. A comparative study of their respective temperaments and ideals however shows that this was inevitable. William Adam was above everything else a devout and sincere *Christian missionary*. He might have discarded the *Trinitarian* basis of his faith in favour of *Unitarianism* due to Rammohun's influence, but that did not in any sense lead him away from Christian orthodoxy. Even after his conversion to Unitarianism, he continued to believe whole-heartedly in Christ as the *only Redeemer* of humanity and in the Bible as constituting the *only record* of Divine Revelation. To him no other religious teacher of the world could make even a near approach to Christ in point of spiritual and moral stature ; no other scripture could compare with the Gospels in point of authority. After he had become a Unitarian, he therefore quite naturally devoted all his energies to the task of spreading the *Unitarian form of Christianity* in the country. The enthusiasm with which he served the Calcutta Unitarian Committee and the British Indian Unitarian Association, is a good example of his earnestness. Rammohun's interpretation of the Old and the New Testaments however was that of an unbiased critical scholar and not at all dogmatic. He was full of admiration for the person of Jesus Christ as well as for the latter's sublime moral teachings. But the miracles and mysteries of Christianity left him cold. Nor could he accept the Bible as the *only Revealed Book* and Christ as the *only Lord and Redeemer* of the world. On these questions he disagreed fundamentally with Christians of both the *Trinitarian* and *Unitarian* schools.

It may however be legitimately asked, why, in that case, he associated himself so intimately with the Unitarian Christians and identified himself so closely with the latter's cause in this country, from 1821 to 1828. We can think of three possible reasons :

(i) His thorough schooling in the higher philosophy of Hinduism, particularly in the *Vedānta*, had revealed to him the great depth and subtlety of the spiritual doctrines of the Hindus and had convinced him that unity of God-head was one of the basic concepts of the Hindu religion. As a result of his study of the Muslim Scriptures, he had been tremendously impressed and influenced by the firm and uncompromising monotheistic stand taken by Islam. Doctrinally he felt attracted to the Unitarian form of Christianity because in it he discovered the *same* monotheistic principles, so dear to his heart. He had however already reached the grounds of his Universal Theism when he became intimate with the Unitarian Christians. His attitude towards Unitarian Christianity was for this reason entirely non-sectarian though immensely respectful. This explains the significant remark with regard to the Unitarian Christians which he made in his tract *Humble Suggestions to his countrymen who believe in the One True God* : "We should feel no reluctance to co-operate with them in religious matters, merely because they consider Jesus Christ as the Messenger of God and their Spiritual Teacher ; for oneness in the object of worship and sameness of religious practice should produce attachment between the worshippers" (*English Works of Rammohun* ed. by Nag and Burman, Part II p. 200 ; also *Prārthanāpratra* in Bengali in Rammohun's *Collected Bengali Works* Sāhitya Parishad Ed. No 4, p. 28). In the publication entitled *Answer of a Hindoo to the question : why do you frequent a Unitarian Place of Worship.....?*, he sets forth the reasons of his attending Unitarian Churches more clearly : "Because Unitarians reject polytheism and idolatry under every sophistical modification, and thereby discountenance all the evil consequences resulting from them. Because Unitarians believe profess and inculcate the doctrine of divine unity—a doctrine which I find firmly



maintained both by the Christian Scriptures and by our most ancient writings commonly called the Vedas'' (*English Works of Rammohun* ed. by Nag and Burman, Pt. II p. 194 ; cf. also above, pp. 165-66).

(ii) Besides confirming his monotheistic convictions Unitarian Christianity held two other specific attractions for Rammohun. He regarded the ethical teachings of Christ as superior to any other system of morality and sincerely believed that, *preached in a non-sectarian manner*, these might ultimately prove to be the most effective means of moral uplift of the Indian nation. Further his advocacy for the introduction of European science and technology in the Indian educational curriculum is well-known (cf. above, pp. 185-86 note ; also Jogananda Das *Rammohun Roy, the Moderniser*, Calcutta, 1958, pp. 4-5). He had fondly hoped that through the medium of Unitarian Christianity, two of his cherished dreams might be realised : first, Unitarian teachers from the west would acquaint the Indian masses with the basic principles of the sublime ethics of Christianity ; secondly they might also instruct Indian students in 'European learning and science'. His answer to the twelfth query of the Unitarian missionary Rev. Henry Ware of America, lays clear emphasis on these points : "...everyone who interests himself in behalf of his fellow creatures, would confidently anticipate the approaching triumph of true religion should philanthropy induce you and friends to send to Bengal as many serious and able *teachers of European learning and science and Christian morality, unmingled with religious doctrines.....*to spread knowledge gratuitously among the native community.....(*italics ours—Editors*). (*Rammohun's English Works*, ed. by Nag and Burman, Pt. IV, "A Letter on the Prospects of Christianity and the means of promoting its reception in India, dated February 2, 1824", p. 50 ; cf. also above, p. 153). This task in Rammohun's opinion could not be carried out by complete secularists who would banish all religious instructions from their syllabus or by orthodox Christian missionaries, who would invariably mix up doctrines of Trinitarian Christianity with their system of education. He expected that the Unitarians would be able to do it in an impartial and non-

sectarian manner without trying to impose the *doctrines* and *dogmas* of Christianity on the Indian people.

(iii) As a result of his study of different religious systems Rammohun had gradually lost faith in all crude outward forms of popular worship and had gradually reached the conviction that the *essence* of all religions, worth the name, was the same. This for him, consisted of faith in one God and service of humanity (*vide* the concluding paragraph of the *Brahmanical Magazine* No. IV in Rammohun's *English Works* ed. by Nag and Burman. II p. 189 ; and the opening paragraph of the tract *Humble Suggestions*, *Ibid.* p. 200 ; cf. also above, pp. 142, 143). It was Rammohun's desire to give a concrete expression to this ideal in the form of an organized institution or church. As a reformer of Hinduism, he wanted that the contemplated body should have a thoroughly *Indian* and *Hindu* character. In his tract entitled *Humble Suggestions* published in 1823, he had already taken up the position of a Universal Theist with a *thoroughly Hindu basis* and had extended the hands of fellowship towards a number of other sects. But the formation of a religious institution of a *universal* as well as *Hindu* character was by no means an easy task. What Rammohun needed, was a *congregational form of public worship* which alone could be the basis of such an organization. Hindu worship being essentially individualistic, Hinduism could hardly provide him with a suitable precedent for this. It is here that the necessary corrective came from Unitarian Christianity. The *congregational worship* of this "monotheistic" Christian church had a great attraction for Rammohun. It will be noticed that ultimately public worship in Rammohun's Brahmo Samaj was modelled, so far as its external form was concerned, on the congregational worship current in the Christian churches. The reading of the *Vedas*, explanation (in Bengali) of the Upanishads, and songs, would correspond exactly to the reading of the Bible, the sermon and the singing of hymns, of Christian worship. The parallelism however was confined exclusively to the outward form. The emphasis and contents in two cases were fundamentally different. Unitarian Christianity can therefore certainly be regarded as having



supplied Rammohun with a solid formal basis for his Universal Church when he was in desperate need of it. It was certainly an important step in the march of Rammohun's mind towards the goal of Universal Theism. But it was never an end in itself. We should also be careful, while we recognize the great importance of Unitarianism as one of the shaping influences in the formation of Rammohun's universal outlook, not to ignore the still more fundamental roles played in the same respect by Hinduism and Islam. This point has been very convincingly developed by S. Nalin Chandra Ganguli in his *Raja Rammohun Roy*, (Builders of Modern India Series, Y. M. C. A. Publications, Calcutta 1934), Chapter IX, pp. 128-57.

There is reason to believe that Adam had misunderstood Rammohun from the very beginning of the period of their acquaintance. Even after he had parted company with his Trinitarian colleagues of the Baptist Mission and Rammohun had entered into the famous controversy that had started over his *Precepts of Jesus*, he continued to entertain the hope that Rammohun would ultimately be convinced of the truth of the doctrines of Christianity. The following extracts from his open letter to Rev. William Yates, written in May, 1824, commenting on Rammohun's *Precepts of Jesus*, clearly illustrate his attitude: "Rammohun Roy...has fallen into the...mistake of placing the end before the means and endeavouring to attain the one without the use of the other. The religion of Christ is superior to every other religion not only as possessing a purer and more sublime morality but as enforcing that morality with a higher authority and with more powerful motive. To separate therefore the doctrinal from the practical parts of Scripture, if it were possible, would be hurtful by diminishing the probability that the latter would be obeyed..... He did not perhaps go quite so far as an ardent Missionary might have wished ;...He could not at once bring his understanding to embrace all the subtleties of scholastic theology ;...Besides his work, if it had been left by an officious zeal to its full and unimpeded operation, might have produced the most beneficial effects in

gradually preparing his countrymen for the reception not only of the Precepts of Jesus as the Guide to Peace and Happiness, but also of the entire Scriptures as the Records of Divine Revelation (J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 28, pp. 67, 69). It is thus obvious that Adam had all along regarded Rammohun's great admiration and reverence for the *moral precepts* of Christianity as only a *prelude* to the latter's ultimate acceptance of the *entire body of Christian doctrines*. In other words he had the fond hope that Rammohun in course of time would be a full-fledged convert to Unitarian Christianity. He had thus unfortunately read Rammohun's mind from the wrong end.

It would be easy for us to explain the differences and misunderstandings that crept into the relations between the two friends (e. g. pp. 184-85, 218-19, above), if only we remember the afore-mentioned background of their respective thought-processes. That would also throw light on the fundamentally different views that the two took of the newly established Brahmo Samaj. Adam at first expected that though, "to prevent prejudice from being excited, it will be necessary to keep Christianity out of view at present in connection with this auxiliary, but it will really be (what it perhaps may not be *nominally*) an auxiliary to our views...(cf. above, p 222). He was however shocked when he found that the Brahmo Samaj was going to propagate the worship of One God "on the basis of the divine authority of the Ved, and not of the Christian Scriptures" (cf extract from his letter to Dr. Tuckerman dated January 22, 1829, quoted above, p. 222) ! Still however he continued to hope-against hope that Rammohun's church would ultimately turn out to be "a step towards Christianity" (cf. above, pp. 222-23). But in the end he became completely disillusioned as he was perhaps destined to be, sooner or later, and was forced to admit that to Rammohun, Unitarian Christianity was merely one of a number of instruments "for spreading pure and just notions of God," and the latter did not believe "in the divine authority of the Gospel" (cf. above, p. 225). To Rammohun however, the Brahmo Samaj was the logical conclusion of his prolonged efforts in the



sphere of religious reform. By establishing it, he had given a concrete expression to his ideal of a non-sectarian universal religious body on a specifically Hindu basis. The doctrine of self-knowledge inculcated by the *Upanishads*, the social message of Buddhism, the emphatic monotheism of Islam, the simple piety of the saints of the medieval Indian *bhakti*-movement, the ethical teachings of Jesus Christ, each had at different times helped to shape this universal outlook. The establishment of the Brahmo Samaj had brought this "synthetic analysis going to the rock-bottom of religious experience itself" to a focal point. Mentally Rammohun and Adam thus stood poles apart. Their parting of ways came as a direct consequence of this basic fact. There is no element of surprise in it.

During the rest of Rammohun's career in India any further active co-operation between himself and Adam was naturally not possible on the religious plane. It is however pleasant to think that the two retained their friendship and deep appreciation of each other's worth to the end. As early as 1826, Rammohun had made generous provisions for Mr. Adam's family in his will (cf. above, p. 215). Adam paid eloquent public tribute to the genius of Rammohun, twelve years after the death of the latter, in a lecture delivered at Boston, U. S. A. in 1845. The lecture has been edited and published by Rakhal Das Halder under the title *A Lecture on the Life and Labours of Rammohun Roy* (Publishers G. P. Roy & Co., Calcutta, 1879) (cf. above, pp 126-27).

Mr. Adam, it may be mentioned, stayed in India up to 1838 and engaged himself in various types of educational and philanthropic work. He was appointed Commissioner of Vernacular Education in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by Lord William Bentinck in 1835 and in that capacity submitted three extremely valuable Educational Reports (two in 1835 and one in 1838) to the Government. For a well-documented sketch of his career, see S. C. Sanial's paper "The Rev. William Adam" in the *Bengal Past and Present* Vol. VIII (January-June, 1914) pp. 251-72.

## IV

Rammohun never believed in the fiction that as a "race," the Europeans were necessarily superior to the Asiatics. There are many passages scattered in his voluminous writings which would go to show that he regarded his own countrymen as being possessed of the same capabilities as those of any other civilized nation. In the third number of the *Brahmanical Magazine* he had, in answer to "aspersions on Hindu morals" by the Christian missionaries, sharply drawn the latters' attention to the fact that "the domestic life of Europeans might not compare favourably with that of Hindus" (cf. above, p. 129 ; also Rammohun's *English Works* ed. by Nag and Burman, Part II, p. 167 : "As to the "moral death" ascribed to them by the Editor, I might easily draw a comparison between the domestic conduct of the inhabitants of Europe, to shew where the grossest deficiency lies ;..."). In replying to the ninth additional query of the Select Committee of the House of Commons which asked regarding his countrymen, "What capability of improvement do they posses ?", Rammohun said briefly : "They have the same capability of improvement as any other civilized people" (Rammohun's *English Works* ed. by Nag and Burman, Part III p. 66). The curt answer proves very clearly that the "natural inferiority" of his countrymen to other "civilized" peoples of the world, was no *idée fixe* with Rammohun. Further the following remark of his, made in a private letter, dated January 13, 1828, deserves to be remembered in this context : "I agree with you that in point of vices the Hindus are not worse than the generality of Christians in Europe and America" (cf. above, p. 213). His treatise entitled *Brief Remarks regarding modern encroachments on the ancient rights of females according to the Hindu Law of Inheritance* (written in 1822) is also found to close with the same note : "But should the Natives receive the same advantages of education Europeans generally enjoy, and be brought up in the same notions of honour, they will I trust, be found equally with Europeans, worthy of the confidence of their countrymen and respect of all men" (Rammohun's *English Works* ed. by Nag and



Burman, Part I p. 9). It is clear from all these instances that Rammohun believed the Indian nation to be capable of improvement and progress just like any other civilised nation of the world. He was quite conscious of the decadent state of the India of his day and naturally hoped that a long period of contact with the West would be necessary to drag the country out of this stage of coma. But his great admiration for the western civilization was never blind or uncritical ; it did not for a moment destroy his faith in the potentialities of his countrymen or the legitimate pride he took in the great heritage of India's past.

## CHAPTER VII.

(1828—1830).

### THE ABOLITION OF SUTTEE

1828. March—Lord Amherst leaves India. July 4—Lord William Bentinck proclaimed Governor-General. August 18—Rammohun's Letter on the Jury Act. August 20—The Brahmo Samaj founded.
1829. [*Religious Instructions founded on Sacred Authorities*] November 8—Lord William Bentinck's Minute on Suttee. November 12—Rammohun's letter on the European (Indigo) planters. December 4—Regulation passed for the Abolition of Suttee.
1830. January 8—Rammohun notifies to Lord William Bentinck his elevation to the rank of Rajah. January 16—Presents Anti-Suttee address of thanks to Lord William Bentinck. January 17—Formation of the *Dharma Sabhā*. January 23—The Adi Brahmo Samaj building opened. Its *Trust-deed*. *Abstract of the Arguments* regarding Suttee. *Rights of Hindus over Ancestral property*. July—Rammohun helps the missionary, Duff, to found his first school. November—Rammohun sails for England.

The concluding stages of the Anti-Suttee movement form a highly instructive chapter in the history of the British government of India. It is interesting to watch the slow and cautious steps with which the official mind approached the decision which was at last precipitated by the resolute action of one strong personality. The feeling of the authorities had been, as we have seen, opposed to forcible repression of the rite. They preferred



to hope that the influence of European education and the efforts of native reformers like Rammohun Roy would lead to its gradual desuetude. Out of this otiose optimism they were startled by the sudden increase of victims in 1825. The annual tale of Sutees rose at a bound from 577 to 639,—an advance of more than ten per cent. And the increase was not least rapid in and around Calcutta,—the very district where European culture was most strongly entrenched. The Nizamat Adalat considered the matter afresh (in November 1826). Judge Smith again insisted on immediate and entire prohibition ; and he was supported in this demand by Judge Ross who expressed the belief that it would not, as had been feared, cause any disaffection among the native troops. These minutes coming before the Council, Vice-President Bayley (January 13, 1827) could not commit himself to so peremptory a policy, but recommended that Suttee should be prohibited in the territories where the earlier regulations were not in force, and where the British sway had been recently introduced, viz. in the districts of Delhi, Sangor, Nerbudda, Kumaon, and Rangpore. Mr. Harington (February 18, 1827) drafted a Minute for the Suppression of Suttee, against the time when that measure should be decided on. On March 1st, Vice-President Combermere strongly advocated the immediate adoption of Mr. Bayley's proposals. Lord Amherst (March 18) declined the taking of this step, as he did not believe the practice prevailed in the districts specified, or that half measures would be productive of good ; and he was not prepared to enact its total suppression. He trusted to the diffusion of

knowledge among the natives for the gradual eradication of the "detestable superstition." He "would rather wait a few years" for this desirable consummation.<sup>1</sup> At the end of 1827 the Judges reiterated their convictions on the matter, and Mr. Bayley urged his plea once more. On January 4, 1828, Lord Amherst again declined to legislate, looking to "general instruction and the unostentatious exertions of our local officers" to bring about the diminution, "at no very distant period the final extinction of the barbarous rite". This is practically his last word on the subject. Two months later he left India.

He was succeeded in Governor-Generalship by a man of very different character. Lord William Bentinck was one of those resolute Englishmen, of slight culture but remarkable practical insight, who, seeing that a certain thing needs to be done, do it, and by the fact accomplished dissipate a thousand fears and difficulties. Faced with an ugly deficit and charged with unpopular commissions from the Directors, he cheerily undertook one fresh measure after another of dreaded reform, and showed how much stronger one man in earnest is than a whole crowd of conventional obstacles. He found the Suttee problem confronting him. He was not content, like Lord Amherst, to "wait a few years." He proceeded to grapple with it at once. He was well aware that the ultimate sanction of British sway was the sword; and his first quest was to know how far the army would support him. Confi-

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1. See, Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 70, pp. 128-29—Editors.



dential inquiries from forty-nine experienced officers elicited the gratifying information that the Sepoy would be scarcely if at all affected by the prohibition of the practice. Twenty-four out of the forty-nine officers declared in favour of its immediate and entire abolition ; only five were opposed to change of any kind. The army was safe.

The judiciary was daily becoming more pronounced. The humane zeal of local British magistrates outran their legal powers. Cases occurred where they interfered to prevent Suttees which the law allowed ; and the Supreme Court was forced, on appeal, to sanction the perpetration of the horrid deed. But the English gentlemen who formed the Nizamat Adalat winced under the charge of "unnecessarily authorizing suicide" ; and we are not surprised to find that in 1828—before the reports of the military officers had been presented, four judges out of five declared for putting a stop at once for ever to the hateful custom. A year later all five judges were agreed. The Superintendents of Police for both Upper and Lower Provinces emphatically vouched for the complete safety of the step. Nine-tenths of the public functionaries in the interior were reported to be in its favour. Anglo-Indian opinion was practically unanimous.

Native opinion it was more difficult to sound directly. But the Governor-General had too keen an eye for the material facts of the situation to overlook the value of the man who had been a life-long mediator between Hindu and European civilizations ; and he was still less likely to omit consulting

the great native champion of the Anti-Suttee movement. Lord William Bentinck took counsel of Rammohun Roy. There is an interesting story of the way their first interview was arranged, which we transcribe from the Rev. Principal Macdonald's lecture on the Hindu Reformer\* :

Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General, on hearing that he would likely receive considerable help from the Rajah in suppressing the pernicious custom of widow-burning, sent one of his aides-de-camp to him expressing his desire to see him. To this the Rajah replied, "I have now given up all worldly avocations, and am engaged in religious culture and in the investigation of truth. Kindly express my humble respects to the Governor-General and inform him that I have no inclination to appear before his august presence, and therefore I hope that he will kindly pardon me." These words the aide-de-camp conveyed to the viceroy, who enquired, "What did you say to Rammohun Roy?" The aide-de-camp replied, "I told him that Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General would be pleased to see him." The Governor-General answered "Go back and tell him again that *Mr. William Bentinck* will be highly obliged to him if he will kindly see him

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\* *Rajah Rammohun Roy the Bengali Religious Reformer.* Published at the *Herald Press*, Calcutta, 1879. The lecture gives the incident on the authority of "a Bengali friend." Essentially the same account was communicated in writing to the Commemoration of Rammohun Roy in January, 1879, by Rammohun's "oldest pupil," Ananda Chandra Basu. His version of his Master's declination runs: "I am withdrawn from worldly affairs and am devoted to the reading of the Śāstras and the study of religion" etc., etc. (The incident is narrated also in the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* for Bhādra, 1802 Śaka, pp. 95-96, where a large number of anecdotes and episodes of Rammohun's life has been collected on the authority of eye-witnesses and personal acquaintances who were still living.—*Editors.*)



once." This the aide-de-camp did and Rammohun Roy could no longer refuse the urgent and polite request of his lordship.

The incident sheds light on the character of both the illustrious reformers. Rammohun's refusal may at first cause some surprise. He might have been expected to welcome conference with a ruler so able and willing to accelerate reform. But it must be observed that the invitation gave no hint of the particular purpose for which it was issued. Rammohun did no more than decline an invitation to Court ; he pleaded a distaste for its worldly pageantry and frivolous ambitions ; and perhaps he was unwilling to give colour to the charge of his being a tool of the conquerors. When he found it was the man and not the Court functionary who appealed to him, he straightway waived all scruple and agreed to come.

A more official and less picturesque account of the matter is given by the *India Gazette*, of July 27, 1829 :

An eminent native philanthropist who has long taken the lead of his countrymen on this great question has been encouraged to submit his views of it in a written form, and has been subsequently honoured with an audience by the Governor-General, who, we learn, has expressed his anxious desire to put an end to a custom constituting so foul a blot.....

The *Gazette* goes on to mention three courses as open to the Government,—either rigidly to enforce existing regulations ; or to suppress Suttee in the provinces of Bengal and Bihar where it was most prevalent, but where British rule was longest known and best appreciated ; or to abolish it throughout the Presidency.

The purport of Rammohun's advice to the

Governor-General has been preserved in Lord William Bentinck's Minute of November 8. And here another surprise awaits us. We naturally suppose that the leader of the revolt against the burning of widows would eagerly grasp at the prospect of its prompt and forcible suppression by Government. But Rammohun positively endeavoured to dissuade Lord Bentinck from this drastic project. The Governor General, after detailing Mr. Horace Wilson's arguments against abolition,<sup>2</sup> wrote on<sup>3</sup> :

I must acknowledge that a similar opinion as to the probable excitation of a deep distrust of our future intentions was mentioned to me in conversation by that enlightened native, Rammohun Roy, a warm advocate for the abolition of *sati* and of all other superstitions and corruptions engrafted on the Hindu religion, which he considers originally to have been a pure Deism. It was his opinion that the practice might be suppressed quietly and unobservedly by increasing the difficulties and by the indirect agency of the police. He apprehended that any public enactment would give rise to general apprehension ; that the reasoning would be : 'While the English were contending for power they deemed it politic to allow universal toleration and to respect our religion, but having obtained the supremacy their first act is a violation of their profession, and the next will probably be, like the Muhammadan conquerors, to force upon us their own religion<sup>4</sup>.'

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2. For the text of H. H. Wilson's letter to Captain R. Benson, Military Secretary to Government, dated November 25, 1828, containing the former's arguments against the abolition of Sati, see J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India*. No. 75, pp. 133-37.—Editors.

3. For the text of Bentinck's Minute on Sati, *Ibid* No. 77, pp. 139-48.—Editors.

4. Here, it may be said, Rammohun showed much greater insight into the character of his countrymen than



We may explain Rammohun's attitude by recalling his constitutional aversion to coercion ; and any one who had undergone the bitter persecution which had fallen to his lot, might be pardoned for over-estimating the strength of popular antagonism to reform. The man of force argued differently from the man of suasion. He observed that out of 463 Suttees 420 took place in the Lower Provinces and 287 in the Calcutta Division. The figures for Suttees in the Bengal Presidency during the last four years in which the practice was tolerated are given thus :

Divisions	1825	1826	1827	1828
Calcutta ...	398	324	337	309
Dacca ...	101	65	49	47
Murshidabad ...	21	8	2	10
Patna ...	47	65	55	55
Benares ...	55	48	49	33
Bareilly ...	17	8	18	10
TOTAL ...	639	518	510	464

The people in these districts had through the contemporary British administrators. The *abrupt* abolition of the evil custom of Sati came to be regarded by masses of conservative Hindus and even by Muslims exactly in the same light as he had feared. This sentiment among others served as a powerful motive force behind the Mutiny of 1857. The rebel leaders "made capital of this salutary reform." See Surendranath Sen *Eighteen Fifty-Seven* (Delhi 1957) pp. 5-6. Rammohun felt that for the smooth and successful progress of his scheme of social reform it was necessary as far as possible, to carry the masses of his countrymen with him,—*Editors*.

centuries been so habituated to submission that "insurrection or hostile opposition to the ruling power may be affirmed to be an impossible danger." Had Suttee been prevalent among "the bold and manly people" of the Upper Provinces, the problem would have been fraught with much graver peril. But, as the faculty of resistance had all but died out of the chief practisers of Suttee, their apprehensions and suspicions might be safely disregarded.

So Lord William Bentinck cut the Gordian knot ; and on the 4th of December, 1829, the Regulation was passed which declared the practice illegal and punishable as a criminal offence. All persons convicted of aiding and abetting in the sacrifice of a Hindu widow, whether she were a willing victim or not, whether she requested them or not, were pronounced guilty of culpable homicide ; and where violence or other means of overpowering the victim's will were employed, the death sentence might, at the discretion of the Court, be inflicted. Suttee was abolished. The reputation of the British Government and the fair fame of religion itself were redeemed from one of the foulest stains.

It would not be just to describe this result as a triumph of principle over policy. The toleration of Suttee hitherto had been due to a conflict of principles. On the one side was the plain principle of humanity, which demanded the instant suppression of the rite. On the other side was the sacred principle of religious liberty, which forbade the conqueror to interfere with the religious practices of a subject race. One cannot but admire the sensitive magnanimity which mingled with the calculating prudence of the British rulers and made them shrink



from doing violence even to the most barbarous and outrageous dictates of the native conscience.

It is Rammohun's distinctive glory that he relieved the British Government from this deadlock. He proved from the authoritative standards of Hinduism that Suttee was not a religious duty. He did more than this. He showed that not religious devotion, but the avaricious desire of relatives to avoid the cost of supporting the widow, had a great deal to do with the perpetuation of Suttee. Its suppression would therefore do no wrong to the faith which British honour had pledged itself to tolerate and respect. The principles of humanity and of religious liberty no longer clashed. The atrocity could consistently be put down. This solution of the difficulty was set in the forefront of the prohibitory Regulation :

The practice of Suttee, or of burning or burying alive the widows of Hindoos, is revolting to the feelings of human nature ; *it is nowhere enjoined by the religion of the Hindoos as an imperative duty ; on the contrary, a life of purity and retirement on the part of the widow is more especially and preferably inculcated*, and by a vast majority of that people throughout India the practice is not kept up nor observed ; in some extensive districts it does not exist ; in those in which it has been most frequent it is notorious that in many instances acts of atrocity have been perpetrated which have been shocking to the Hindoos themselves, and in their eyes unlawful and wicked. The measures hitherto adopted to discourage and prevent such acts have failed of success, and the Governor-General in Council is deeply impressed with the conviction that the abuses in question cannot be effectually put an end to without abolishing the practice altogether.<sup>5</sup>

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5. See J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 84, pp. 153-54. — Editors.

But for the researches and the agitation carried on by Rammohun Roy, it is a question whether this preamble could have been written. Certain it is that the sentences which we have italicised would have fallen almost powerless but for the way Rammohun had driven home the truths they contained—by speech and newspaper and pamphlet—to the native mind.<sup>6</sup>

But the old custom was not to be surrendered without a strong protest. The *Samāchār Chandrikā*, the organ of Conservative Hinduism, sounded the alarm ; and the *India Gazette* of Nov. 30th announced that a petition against the abolition of widow-burning was already in progress. The *Gazette* expressed the hope that the *Samibād Kaumudi* and the *Baṅga Doot*, as representing the more liberal portion of the native public, would correct current misconceptions and set the action of the Government in the right light. This deserves notice, as tribute to the value of Rammohun's

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6. See in this connection the text of Mrs. Frances Keith Martin's letter in the *Bengal Hurkaru* dated November 26, 1829, on the credit due to Rammohun Roy for the abolition of *Sati*, and the following editorial comment on it. "Let us not therefore offer our exclusive praise and gratitude either to Rammohun Roy or to Lord William Bentinck. The former would never have succeeded in his patriotic and enlightened labours without the co-operation of the latter nor would Lord Bentinck have ventured on so desirable a measure, if the minds of the natives had not been prepared to abandon the worst of superstitions, by the unwearied labours of their distinguished countryman". Majumdar *Op. Cit.* Nos. 80, 81, pp. 150-52. Cf. also above, p. 106.—*Editors.*



journalistic work.<sup>7</sup> The petition against the new Regulation found little support, the *Gazette* said, among the respectable and influential classes. Signatures were procured with difficulty, having to be extorted by threats and taunts.<sup>8</sup> So stated the *Asiatic Journal* of June 1830, which even went so far as to declare that "the Government had satisfied itself that the majority of the native community was decidedly opposed to the practice."

At last on January 14th (1830), "a numerous and respectable body of petitioners," as the Governor-General described them, consisting of 800 inhabitants of Calcutta, laid before him their prayer for the abandonment of the prohibition.<sup>9</sup> The main purpose of their representations was to overthrow the position which Rammohun, and after him the Government, had taken up,—that the practice of

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7. The *Baṅga Dūt*, was a progressive Bengali Weekly with which Rammohun came to be intimately connected for sometime, as one of the proprietors, in 1829. The first issue of the paper was published on May 10, 1829. It was the Bengali counterpart of the *Bengal Herald* in English which was published for the first time on May, 9, 1829. See Brajendranath Banerji *Vāṅglā Sāmayik Patra* (Third Ed.) Vol. I pp. 30-31.—Editors.

8. The *Samibād Kaumudi* as quoted by the *Calcutta Monthly Journal* May, 1830, narrates an interesting instance of the bullying tactics adopted by the advocates of *Sati* for the collection of funds to carry on their *pro-Sati* activities. (Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and the Progressive Movements in India* No. 95, pp. 170—71).—Editors.

9. For the text of the petition, together with a paper of authorities and the reply of the Governor General thereto, see J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 86, pp. 156-63.—Editors.

Suttee was not required by the laws of Hindu religion. This they denounced as "a doctrine derived from a number of Hindoos, who have apostatized from the religion of their forefathers, who have defiled themselves by eating and drinking forbidden things in the society of Europeans and are endeavouring to deceive your Lordship in Council." They humbly submitted that "in a question so delicate as the interpretation of our sacred books and the authority of our religious usages, none but pundits and Brahmins, and teachers of holy lives and known learning and authority ought to be consulted,"—not "men who have neither any faith nor care for the memory of their ancestors." They suggested with a touch of rather pungent irony that if his Lordship in Council *would* assume to himself "the difficult and delicate task of regulating the conscience of a whole people on the authority of its own sacred writers," he should trust to recognized and accredited and orthodox experts. To assist him in this direction, they appended a paper of citations from legal authorities, signed by 120 pundits, and intended to show that Suttee was a religious duty. They were obliged to quote the decisive sayings of Vishnu and Manu, which allowed a widow either to practise austerities or to ascend her husband's pyre. By tortuous exegesis and by liberal appeal to immemorial usage, the effort was made to transmute the option between alternatives into a demand for self-immolation. Lord Bentinck, in reply, was unkind enough to say that the authorities they cited "only confirmed the supposition that widows are not by the religious writings of the Hindoos commanded to



destroy themselves." No attack on Hindu religion was committed or intended. If they disputed his interpretation of Hindu and British laws, they might appeal to the King in Council. Another petition, of similar purport and signed by 346 "respectable persons" from the interior, was presented at the same time, with legal opinions signed by 28 pundits<sup>10</sup>.

Counter demonstrations were speedily forthcoming. Two days afterwards two addresses were presented to the Governor-General in support of his anti-Suttee policy. One was from the Christian inhabitants of Calcutta, and bore some 800 signatures. The other was signed by 300 native inhabitants of the same city and presented by Rammohun Roy and several of his well-known comrades.<sup>11</sup> This address (January 16th), of which Rammohun is the reputed and probable author, refers the introduction of Suttee to jealousy and selfishness, acting under the cloak of religion, but in defiance of the most sacred authorities. It rehearses the yet more barbarous abuses of this barbarous rite, and rejoices at the prospect of "the most ancient and purest system of Hindu religion" being "no longer set at nought by the Hindus themselves." It expresses

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10. See Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 86, p. 162.—Editors.

11. See in this connection J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* Nos. 89 and 90, pp. 165-67. The addresses in Bengali and English presented by Rammohun and his associates to Lord William Bentinck were published in the *Government Gazette* Vol. XVI No. 858 (January 18, 1830) (First Supplement pp. 3-4), together with Bentinck's reply. See Appendix III.—Editors.

“the deepest gratitude” and “the utmost reverence” to his Lordship in Council “for the everlasting obligation” he had “graciously conferred on the Hindu community at large.” The signatories finally confess themselves “at a loss to find language sufficiently indicative even of a small portion of the sentiments” they desire to express. Rammohun’s joy at so unexpected an erasure of this historic blot from the Hindu escutcheon might well be too great to be altogether articulate.

Next day the opponents of the measure met and resolved to appeal to the authorities in England. Feeling the need of some permanent organization, they formed themselves into a *Dharma Sabhā*, or Religious Society,<sup>12</sup>—in evident contrast to the *Brahma Sabhā* of Rammohun and his friends. They subscribed 11,260 rupees on the spot, and decided to erect a meeting place. The purpose of the association was manifestly militant. It was to enable “the excellent and the noble”—so ran the explanation of their own organ—to “unite and continually devise means for protecting our religion and our excellent customs and usages.” At its first meeting the treasurer significantly remarked with “the concurrence of all present” that “those Hindus who do not follow the rites of Hindu religion should be excluded from the Hindu Society.” “No names, however, were mentioned,”—a reticence which the

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12. See J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India*. No. 87, pp. 163-65. cf. also Brajendranath Banerji, *Sambādpātre Sekāler Kathā* Vol. I (Third Ed.) pp. 304-07.—*Editors*.



*Chandrikā* hoped would ere long be laid aside<sup>13</sup>. Rammohun was made to feel how much mischief lurked behind these threats.

The *Abstract of the Arguments regarding the Burning of Widows considered as a Religious Rite*, which was issued in 1830, may be taken as his rejoinder to the manifesto of the 128 pundits. He wished to gather into a clear and concise epitome for popular use the points which had been scattered through many essays and tracts. These he grouped under three heads. According to the Sacred Books of the Hindus, concremation was (1) not obligatory but at most optional; (2) not the most commendable but the least virtuous act a widow could perform; and (3) must be a voluntary ascending of the pile and entering into the flames—a mode never practised in the conventional Suttee. The tract concludes with devout “thanks to Heaven, whose protecting arm has rescued our weaker sex from cruel murder,” and “our character as a people” from international opprobrium.

While his campaign against Suttee was drawing to this triumphant conclusion, Rammohun Roy was busily engaged in other directions as champion of Indian rights and interests. We find him writing on August 18, 1828, to Mr. J. Crawford, and entrusting to him petitions for presentation to both Houses of Parliament, signed by Hindus and Mohamedans, against the new Jury Act which came into

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13. Majumdar *Op. Cit.* No. 98. pp. 173-74. Banerji, *Sambādpātre Sekāler Kathā* Vol. I (Third. Ed.) pp. 300-03. —Editors.

operation in the beginning of 1827. He thus concisely states the grounds of grievance :

In his famous Jury Bill, Mr. Wynn, the late President of the Board of Control, has by introducing religious distinctions into the judicial system of this country, not only afforded just grounds for dissatisfaction among the Natives in general, but has excited much alarm in the breast of everyone conversant with political principles. Any Natives, either Hindu or Mohamedan, are rendered by this Bill subject to judicial trial by Christians, either European or Native, while Christians, including Native Converts, are exempted from the degradation of being tried either by a Hindu or Mussulman juror, however high he may stand in the estimation of society. This Bill also denies both to Hindus and Mussulmans the honor of a seat in the Grand Jury even in the trial of fellow Hindus or Mussulmans. This is the sum total of Mr. Wynn's late Jury Bill, of which we bitterly complain.

In this letter Rammohun shows once more how deeply the analogy between Ireland and India and the prospects of nationalism in both countries had impressed him. Had not Mr. Wynn seen misery enough result in Ireland from making civil discriminations between different religious beliefs? Why should he want to reproduce the same calamities in India? Rammohun goes on to suggest a possibility which is by no means so remote now as when he wrote :

Supposing that some 100 years hence the Native character becomes elevated from constant intercourse with Europeans and the acquirements of general and political knowledge as well as of modern arts and sciences, is it possible that they will not have the spirit as well as the inclination to resist effectually any unjust and oppressive measures serving to degrade them in the scale of society? It should not be lost sight of that the position of India is very different from that of Ireland, to any quarter of which an English fleet may suddenly convey a body



of troops that may force its way in the requisite direction and succeed in suppressing every effort of a refractory spirit. Were India to share one fourth of the knowledge and energy of that country, she would prove from her remote situation, her riches and her vast population, either useful and profitable as a willing province, an ally of the British Empire, or troublesome and annoying as a determined enemy<sup>14</sup>.

In common with those who seem partial to the British rule from the expectation of future benefits arising out of the connection, I necessarily feel extremely grieved in often witnessing Acts and Regulations passed by Government without consulting or seeming to understand the feelings of its Indian subjects and without considering that this people have had for more than half a century the advantage of being ruled by and associated with an enlightened nation, advocates of liberty and promoters of knowledge.

In default of other means of making their voice heard, the natives of India resolved to petition, and invoked the help of friends like Mr. Crawford<sup>15</sup>.

We have quoted this letter at some length because of the far-sighted glance into the future it reveals. There is here in germ the national aspiration which is now breaking forth into cries for "representation of India in the Imperial Parliament", "Home Rule for India", and even "India for the Indians". The prospect of an educated India, of an

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14. In many places in his statements and writings Rammohun gives indication that he had a clear vision of *a future India completely independent of British rule*. See, Supplementary Note II to Chapter VIII below.—Editors.

15. The text of the Indian Petition to the British Parliament against certain provisions of the Jury Act has been printed in J. K. Majumdar's *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 196, pp. 360-70 —Editors.

India approximating to European standards of culture, seems to have never been long absent from Rammohun's mind, and he did, however vaguely, claim in advance for his countrymen the political rights which progress in civilization inevitably involves. Here again Rammohun stands forth as the tribune, and prophet of the New India.\*

But his nationalism was of no narrow type. It was not bound up with the interests of a few well-to-do classes. It was ready to welcome in the interests of the labouring masses, an extensive importation of European settlers and European capital. An outcry of the baser order of nationalism having been raised against the indigo planters of Bengal, Rammohun came boldly to the defence of those aspersed Europeans. His *Sambād Kaumudi* pointed out that indigo plantations had led to waste lands being cultivated, and to the freedom and comfort of the lower classes being increased. The peasants receiving a higher salary from the planters were no longer "victims to the whims of zemindars and great banians." The more numerous and perman-

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\* It is interesting to note that the petition in question was presented to the House of Commons, June 5, 1829, by Mr. Wynn, and the promise of the Government to direct its attention thereto was made by Lord Ashley, then a Commissioner of the Board of Control, and afterwards Lord Shaftesbury. The young philanthropist "acknowledged the advantages which had been derived from admitting the natives of India to take a part in the administration of justice." (Dr. J. K. Majumdar has collected the relevant documents concerning the agitation started by Rammohun against the Jury Act, conveniently in one place. See his *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India*, Nos. 189 to 210, pp. 339-404.—Editors.)



ent the settlement of European gentlemen, the better for the soil, the better also for the poor and middle classes. Writing (November 12, 1829) in answer to certain inquiries on the subject from Mr. Nathaniel Alexander, and speaking from investigations he had instituted for the purpose, Rammohun said :

The advances made to ryots by the indigo planters having increased in most factories in consequence of the price of indigo having risen, and in many, better prices than formerly are allowed for the plant...I am positively of opinion that upon the whole the indigo planters have done more essential good to the natives of Bengal than any other class of persons. This is a fact which I will not hesitate to affirm whenever I may be questioned on the subject either in India or Europe. I at the same time must confess that there are individuals of that class of society who either from hasty disposition or want of due discretion have proved obnoxious to those who expected milder treatment from them. But, my dear sir, you are well aware that no general good can be effected without some partial evil, and in this instance I am happy to say that the former greatly preponderates over the latter. If any class of the natives "would gladly see them all turned out of the country," it would be the zemindars in general, since in many instances the planters have successfully protected the ryots against the tyranny and oppression of their landlord.

Rammohun also attended a public meeting in the Calcutta Town Hall on the 15th of December, 1829, which was called to petition Parliament "to throw open the China and India trade, and to remove the restrictions against the settlement of Europeans in India." He reiterated the strong statements of his letter, and prefaced them with the weighty remark :

From personal experience, I am impressed with the conviction that the greater our intercourse with European

gentlemen, the greater will be our improvement in literary, social and political affairs ; a fact which can be easily proved by comparing the condition of those of my countrymen who have enjoyed this advantage with that of those who unfortunately have not had that opportunity ; and a fact which I could to the best of my belief declare on solemn oath before any assembly<sup>16</sup>.

In suggestive contrast with this defence of the European settler against the propertied classes of Bengal, we may set Rammohun's vindication of the Bengali law of the transmission of property against

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16. See Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No 223, pp. 438-39. Rammohun subsequently explained in detail the position which he had taken up here, in his "Remarks on settlement in India by Europeans," made in England on July 14, 1832 (*Ibid* No. 238, pp. 457-60). Rammohun and his progressive circle of friends including Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasannakumar Tagore and others had uniformly been emphatic supporters of free trade and the import of European "character and capital" into India. They had a correct estimate of the revolutionary role that the middle class had till then played in history and viewed European settlement chiefly as a means of developing a national bourgeoisie in India. Their conservative Hindu opponents seem to have lacked this insight into the workings of progressive historical forces and naturally denounced the move. Documents relevant to the controversy have been collected by Dr. J. K. Majumdar in his *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* Nos. 211 to 238, pp. 407-60. The whole question has recently been reviewed in detail by S. Saumyendranath Tagore in his article "Bhārater Silpaviplab O Rammohun" published serially in the Bengali quarterly *Chaturāṅga* Vol. XX, No. 3 (Kartik-Paush 1365 B.S.) pp. 246-66 ; No. 4 (Māgh-Chaitra 1365 B. S.) pp. 333-48 ; Vol XXI No. 1 (Vaisākh-Ashādh 1366 B. S.) pp. 44-59 ; No. 2 (Śrāvaṇa-Aśvin 1366 B. S.) pp. 124-39 ; No. 3 (Kartik-Paush 1366 B. S.) pp. 321-33.—*Editors*.



the findings of the British Court. British judges had wavered in their interpretation of the Hindus' power of alienation over ancestral property. About this time (1829—1830) Sir C. E. Grey, then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, declared in favour of limiting the power in question. Rammohun accordingly brought out a book in 1830 on *The Rights of Hindus over Ancestral Property according to the law of Bengal*. This essay showed that of the two great treatises on the law of Hindu inheritance, the Mitāksharā was accepted throughout the greater part of India, while the Dāyabhāga had been long established as paramount authority in Bengal. Numerous instances were quoted to indicate the difference and even contrariety of the two codes ; and on the crucial point it was shown that the Mitāksharā limited the disposal of ancestral real property by requiring the consent of son and grandson, whereas the Dāyabhāga left a man free to alienate it as he pleased. Recent decisions in British Bengali Courts had ignored the distinctive and established Bengali law and had followed the teachings of the Mitāksharā. This breach of loyalty to Bengali institutions could not be excused by appeals to sayings in the Hindu scriptures, which imposed moral limits on power of alienation. These were ethical precepts, not legal enactments ; and a vast amount of learning is expended in maintaining the legal validity of the Bengali digest along with the ethical authority of the sacred writings. In disputing the principle that "we ought to make that invalid which was considered immoral," Rammohun suggested a number of testing cases, one of which reads curiously in the light of later agitation :

To permit the sale of intoxicating drugs and spirits, so injurious to health, and even sometimes destructive of life, on the payment of duties publicly levied, is an act highly irreligious and immoral. Is the taxation to be, therefore, rendered invalid and payments stopped ?

This essay involved its writer in a lengthy correspondence in the *Hurkaru*, with a critic who signed himself "A Hindu"<sup>17</sup> ; which led to a plentiful display of legal lore and casuistry, but did not modify Rammohun's main contention<sup>18</sup>. That was indeed confirmed by the Sudder Dewany Adalat in 1831, and still later by the Privy Council. Jogendra Chandra Ghosh thinks this result to have been in large measure due to Rammohun's treatise.<sup>19</sup>

Amid the multiplicity of these pursuits, philanthropic, political, economic and legal, Rammohun never lost sight of his central vocation,—to purify and elevate the faith of his countrymen. In 1829 he published a tract entitled, *The Universal Religion ; Religious Instructions founded on Sacred*

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17. For the text of the correspondence, see *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, edited by Kalidas Nag and Debajyoti Burman, Part I (Calcutta 1946) pp. 29-57.—Editors.

18. Rammohun's position as interpreter of Hindu law has been ably discussed by Sj. Atul Chandra Gupta in his Bengali article "Rammohun O Inga-Bhāratīya Ain" in the *Students' Rammohun Centenary Volume* (M. C. Sarkar & Sons Calcutta), Bengali section, pp. 2—12 ; and also by Dr. Naresh Chandra Sengupta in his paper entitled "Rammohun and Law," *The Father of Modern India : Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume* Part II pp. 319-28—Editors.

19. See *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* edited by J. C. Ghosh, Vol. I (Calcutta 1885), Introduction, p. xii.—Editors.



*Authorities.* This is a short catechism, with proof texts from the sacred writings of Hinduism. It describes worship as “a contemplation of the attributes of the Supreme Being.” It styles the object of worship “the author and Governor of the Universe,” “imperceptible and indefinable,” but by His creation and government of the universe known to exist. Worship is to be performed “by bearing in mind that the Author and Governor of this visible Universe is the Supreme Being and comparing this idea with the sacred writings and with reason.” Furthermore “it is proper to regulate our food and conduct agreeably to the sacred writings.” For this worship “a suitable place is certainly preferable, but not necessary” ; “in whatever place, towards whatever quarter or at whatever time the mind is best at rest, that place, that quarter, and that time is the most proper.” This kind of worship cannot be hostile to any other kinds, nor can they reasonably be hostile to it ; “for all believe the object whom they adore to be the Author and Governor of the Universe.”

This is a bold statement to make in face of the facts of fetichism and kindred cults. The infinitely diverse religions of the world will scarcely yield as their common denominator a Theism so pure and lofty as Rammohun’s “Universal Religion.” But Rammohun believed in it intensely and the progress of the Brahma Sabha was witness to his faith.

The time had in fact arrived for providing the new Community with a permanent home of its own. The growth in the funds at its disposal soon rendered possible the purchase of a site in Chitpore

Road and the erection of a building ( a “brick-built messuage”). The Trust Deed, which is dated January 8th, 1830, sets forth the transfer of the property as *from* Dwarakanath Tagore, Kalinath Roy, Prasannakumar Tagore, Ramchandra Vidyavagis, and Rammohun Roy, to the three Trustees, Baikunthath Roy, Radhaprasad Roy, and Ramānath Tagore. The sum paid to the vendors for the site and building is stated to be ten Sicca Rupees (about one guinea) and for the appurtenances five Sicca Rupees more. Whether this nominal sale followed on a prior and more costly purchase, or was tantamount to a real gift does not appear. Possibly the five vendors did make a present of the house and grounds ;\* and the funds which had been gathered

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\* In a *Sketch of the Brahmo Samaj* dated 1873, the authoress says of Rammohun, “He bought a house in Chitpore Road, endowed it with a small fund for the maintenance of public worship...and placed the whole in the hands of trustees.” Dr. George Smith in his *Life of Alexander Duff* Vol. i p. 120, states that Rammohun “had himself erected the new building.” (These speculations however, have been set at rest by Nagen-dranath Chatterjee’s discovery of the original deed of sale of the plot of land, purchased by Rammohun and his friends for the erection of the new building of the Brahmo Samaj. This important document, the text of which has been printed in Chatterjee’s *Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rayer Jibancharit*, Fifth Edition, pp. 304-06, clearly establishes the following points : (a) the plot of land was purchased on June 6, 1829 (Jais̥tha 28, 1236 B. S.) ; (b) the previous owner was one Kaliprasad Kar ; (c) the price paid by Rammohun and his friends, was Rs. 4200/- ; (d) the property thus purchased consisted of four *kāṭhās* and half a *poa* of land, as well as a house, which was presumably demolished later by the purchasers and the new building of the Samaj was erected in its place ; the new



were invested as an endowment on the place. Certainly "the sum of Rupees, 6,080 was kept in the custody of the late well-known firm of Messrs. Mackintosh & Company as a permanent fund, from the interest of which the ordinary expenses of the church were to be met."†

The Trust Deed to this place of worship is a notable theological document.<sup>20</sup> It is the one legal statement of the original creed of the Brahmo Samaj; and being inspired by Rammohun Roy, it falls to be quoted here as the formal deliverance of the purpose of his life-work. The terms of the Trust are that the trustees

Shall at all times permit the said building, land, tenements, hereditaments and premises, with their appurtenances, to be used, occupied, enjoyed, applied and appropriated, as and for a place of Public Meeting, of all sorts and descriptions of people, without distinction, as shall behave and conduct themselves in an orderly, sober, religious, and devout manner ;

For the worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable, and Immutable Being, who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe, but not under, or by any other name, designation, or title, peculiarly used for, and applied to, any particular Being, or Beings, by any man, or set of men, whatsoever.

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building thus raised, is the historic house (No. 55 Upper Chitpore Road, Jorasanko) of the Adi Brahmo Samaj; (e) in the deed of sale Rammohun Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore, Kalinath Roy, Prasannakumar Tagore and Ramchandra Vidya-vagis, are mentioned *together* as purchasers. The money was apparently contributed by the first four. Nagendranath Chatterjee came across the deed of sale in the house of Ramaprasad Roy, the younger son of Rammohun.—*Editors.*)

† K. C. Sen in the *Indian Mirror*, July 1, 1865.

20. For the complete text of the Trust Deed of the Brahmo Samaj, see Appendix IV.—*Editors.*

And that no graven image, statue or sculpture, carving, painting, picture, portrait or the likeness of any thing, shall be admitted within the messuage, building, land, tenements, hereditaments, and premises ; and that no sacrifice, offering, or oblation of any kind or thing, shall ever be permitted therein ; and that no animal or living creature shall, within or on the said messuage, building, land, tenements, hereditaments and premises, be deprived of life, either for religious purposes or for food ;

And that no eating or drinking (except such as shall be necessary, by any accident, for the preservation of life), feasting or rioting be permitted therein or thereon ;

And that, in conducting the said worship or adoration, no object, animate or inanimate, that has been, or is, or shall hereafter become, or be recognized, as an object of worship, by any man, or set of men, shall be reviled, or slightly or contemptuously spoken of, or alluded to, either in preaching, praying, or in the hymns, or other mode of worship that may be delivered or used in the said messuage or building ;

And that no sermon, preaching, discourse, prayer or hymn be delivered, made or used in such worship, but such as have a tendency to the promotion of the contemplation of the Author and Preserver of the Universe, to the promotion of charity, morality, piety, benevolence, virtue, and the strengthening the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds ;

And also, that a person of good repute, and well-known for his knowledge, piety, and morality, be employed by the said trustees...as a resident superintendent, and for the purpose of superintending the worship so to be performed, as is hereinbefore stated and expressed ; and that such worship be performed daily, or at least as often as once in seven days.

On January 23rd, 1830, the building was solemnly set apart to the purposes of public worship. Mr. Montgomery Martin, in his *History of the British Colonies*<sup>21</sup> gives this account of the cere-

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21. See R. Montgomery Martin, *History of the British*



mony : “The institution was opened by the late Rajah Rammohun Roy, accompanied by the writer (the only European present) in 1830. There were about five hundred Hindus present and among them many Brahmins who, after the prayers and singing of hymns had been concluded, received gifts in money to a considerable extent.”

Rammohun must have taken part in this inauguration with a devoutly thankful heart. It was a sign that the movement of religious reform to which he had given his life had attained something like permanency. The society he had founded was showing itself to be no evanescent group of atoms, but a veritable Church. It had passed from the stage of dream and hope, through a series of tentative and preliminary experiments, into a solid materialized fact ; an institution legally in possession of property ; and the endowment settled upon it suggested a prospect of perpetuity. The decisive significance attached to the acquisition of this “local habitation” is shown in its annual celebration by all branches of the Samaj. The Society itself was founded, as we have seen, on the 20th of August, 1828. The building was opened on the 23rd of January, 1830. Yet, though at first the earlier event was yearly commemorated as the Church’s birthday, the 23rd of January, soon came to be observed as the proper anniversary, and Brahmos have generally reckoned from 1830 as the era of the Samaj<sup>22</sup>.

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*Colonies* (in five volumes) Vol. I (Cochrane and M’Crone, London 1834) p. 282 n.—*Editors*.

22. The two annual ceremonies of the Brahmo Samaj commemorate the two celebrated events in the history of

The same year shows us the founder assisting, with characteristic breadth of sympathy, at the beginning of another and widely different religious movement. The great educational departure in Indian missions which is for ever associated with the name of Alexander Duff may boast of Rammohun Roy as its co-initiator. It will be remembered that six years previously the Hindu had, as an attendant on St. Andrew's Kirk, supported a petition to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, begging it to send out missionaries to British India<sup>23</sup>. In response to this plea, the young Scotsman, hereafter so famous, arrived in Calcutta and was soon directed by his friends to the "pleasant garden house in a leafy suburb of Calcutta" where dwelt the "Erasmus of India."\* Duff having unfolded his plans, Rammohun expressed general approval. "All true education," he said, "ought to be religious, since the object was not merely to give information but to develop and regulate all the powers of the mind, the emotions of the heart, and the workings of the conscience. Though not himself a Christian by profession, he had read and studied the Bible and declared that, as

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the Church. The *Bhādrotsava* (Bhādra Festival) recalls the actual foundation of the Samaj on the 6th of Bhādra, 1750 Śaka or 1235 B. S. (August 20, 1828); while the *Māghotsava*. (Māgha Festival) celebrates the anniversary of the inaugural service held in the new building of the Samaj on the 11th of Māgha, 1751 Śaka or 1236 B. S. (January 23, 1830).—Editors.

23. See above, pp. 149-51.—Editors.

\* For this suggestive title and for the following incidents see Dr. George Smith's *Life of Alexander Duff*, Vol. I (London 1879) pp. 112-23.



a book of religious and moral instruction, it was unequalled. As a believer in God, he also felt that everything should be begun by imploring His blessing. He recommended the opening of the proposed school with the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, for in all his reading he "nowhere found any prayer so brief and all-comprehensive" as it. A very significant remark must be quoted entire :

"As a youth," he said to Mr. Duff, "I acquired some knowledge of the English language. Having read about the rise and progress of Christianity in apostolic times, and its corruption in succeeding ages, and then of the Christian Reformation which shook off these corruptions and restored it to its primitive purity, I began to think that something similar might have taken place in India, and similar results might follow here from a reformation of the popular idolatry."

On the young missionary saying that he was at a loss where or how to get a school-house in the native city, Rammohun offered the small hall in Chitpore Road, which the Brahmo Sabha was on the point of leaving for the new building; and driving off at once to the spot secured it for Duff at a rental of £4 a month, one pound less than he himself had been paying. He removed other difficulties from Duff's path. By personal influence among his enlightened Hindu friends, he secured their children for Duff's first pupils<sup>24</sup>. On the day of opening,—the 13th of July, 1830,—Rammohun

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24. See in this connection the interesting reminiscences of S<sup>r</sup>. K. M. Chatterjee, one of the first five students of Duff's School, as embodied in a letter dated, Calcutta, December 22, 1866, in Mary Carpenter's *Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy* (Rammohun Library Edition, Calcutta 1915) pp. 225-27.—Editors.

Roy was present from the first to explain away prejudices. Duff's repetition of the Lord's Prayer in Bengali passed without remark, but a murmur arose among the pupils, when he put copies of the Gospels into their hands and bade them read. Rammohun straightway intervened :

"Christians like Dr. Horace Hayman Wilson have studied the Hindu Shasters and you know that he has not become a Hindu. I myself have read all the Koran again and again ; and has that made me a Mussalman ? Nay, I have studied the whole Bible, and you know I am not a Christian. Why then do you fear to read it ? Read it and judge for yourselves."

This quieted the remonstrants ; but Rammohun was careful to attend every day at ten when the Bible lesson was taken, for the whole of the next month and frequently afterwards,—a very signal evidence of his determination to promote the success of Duff's work. His powerful example soon told. For instance, one of his principal followers, Kalinath Ray Chaudhuri, offered buildings and appliances at Taki, forty miles from Calcutta, for a school to be supervised by Duff and taught on his lines by his teachers, who would be paid by the Chaudhuri family, for Bengali and Persian instruction. This was the beginning of a thriving mission school. Duff might well say in a letter intended to introduce Rammohun Roy to Dr. Chalmers, "He has rendered me the most valuable and efficient assistance in prosecuting some of the objects of the General Assembly's Mission<sup>25</sup>."

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25. To Rammohun the cause of education was sacred. He was ever ready to place it above all narrow considerations of group, creed or sect. There are other instances of such generosity in his career as he showed to Dr. Duff. See Note I at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors*.



While these events were proceeding, Rammohun was making arrangements for his long expected journey to Europe. It was a somewhat unlooked-for occurrence which precipitated his intentions of travel. The Emperor of Delhi, nominal successor to the traditions of the Great Mogul, had a grievance against the real possessors of empire,—the Directors of the British Company. The allowance they granted His Majesty was, he considered, neither equal to the amount guaranteed to him by treaty, nor sufficient for his needs ; and strangely exaggerated stories were circulated about the straits to which the Imperial household was reduced. Having possibly heard of his intended visit to England, the aggrieved potentate decided to appoint Rammohun as his envoy to the British King, to plead for measures of substantial redress. At the same time—apparently about the beginning of August, 1829—he conferred on him the title of Raja<sup>26</sup>. Rammohun, after accepting these honours, took as his assistant in the Imperial service Mr.

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26. The previous successful mission to Bhutan had apparently established Rammohun's reputation as a diplomat (cf. above pp. 39-41). It was therefore quite natural for Akbar II, the Mughal King of Delhi, to want to choose him as his ambassador. The petition in the name of the *Padishah* of Delhi to the King of England was drafted by Rammohun Roy. See *Raja Rammohun Roy and the Last Moghuls : A Selection from Official Records (1803—1859)*, edited by Dr. J. K. Majumdar (Calcutta 1939), No. 109, pp. 196-203 ; cf. also Brajendranath Banerji *Rajah Rammohun Roy's Mission to England* Calcutta, 1926, p. 51. For a critical estimate of Rammohun Roy's memorial, see Spear, *Twilight of the Moghuls* (Cambridge, 1951) pp. 47-49 ; for its text, see Appendix V.—Editors.

Montgomery Martin. This gentleman was editor of the *Bengal Herald*, an English newspaper, of which Dwarakanath Tagore, Nilratna Halidar and Rammohun Roy became, in 1829, the proprietors<sup>27</sup>. This journalistic venture, it seems, did not prosper. Rammohun, as proprietor, was obliged to plead guilty in the Supreme Court of Calcutta to a libel on an attorney, and the paper soon afterwards ceased to appear, Mr. Martin relinquishing his editorship for new duties under the Imperial envoy. According to a facetious and decidedly malicious but evidently well informed writer in the *John Bull* of February 27, 1830,\* the envoy and ex-editor had first arranged to leave for Europe about the beginning of September, 1829. A month later they decided to go overland *via* Allahabad, but for three months Mr. Martin waited in daily readiness

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27. A Weekly Paper in English, the first regular issue of which appeared on May 9, 1829. Two other proprietors were Prasannakumar Tagore and Rajkissen Singh. It was published in four languages, English Bengali Hindusthani and Persian. The *Baṅgadūt* mentioned on p. 262, foot note 7, above, was its Bengali version. For the prospectus of the *Bengal Herald* as well as for an extract from the issue of May 9, 1829, declaring its aims and objects, see Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* Nos. 181 and 182, pp 326-28. Cf. also Martin, *History of the British Colonies* Vol. I pp. 251n-52n.—Editors.

\* Quoted in the *Asiatic Journal* Vol. II, New Series, (May to August 1830), (*Asiatic Intelligence* pp. 201—03). (For Rammohun's letter dated March 7, 1830, to A. Stirling, Secretary to Government, replying to the charges levelled against him in the *John Bull*, see Dr. J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and the Last Moghuls*, Appendix VI, pp. 330-31. —Editors.)



to depart, Meantime the Regulation abolishing Suttee had been passed, and Rammohun was busily engaged, as we have seen, in supporting the action of the Governor General.

The threatened appeal to England of the infuriated supporters of the doomed rite furnished another reason for Rammohun's contemplated journey. His presentation of counter memorials and personal influence in the capital of the Empire would help to circumvent their machinations. A further ground, doubtless present to his mind from the first, was the approaching expiry of the East India Company's Charter. His presence on the spot might help the House of Commons to shape the new Charter more favourably to Indian needs. Rammohun thought the time propitious for approaching the Governor-General on the subject of his errand. On January 8, 1830, while petitions were being actively promoted on both sides of the Suttee question, he wrote Lord Bentinck as follows :

•I beg leave to submit to your Lordship that some months ago I was informed by His Majesty, Uboonnussur Moeenooden Ukbur Badshah, that his Majesty had apprised your Lordship of my appointment as his Elchee (Envoy) to the Court of Great Britain, and of his having been pleased to invest me as His Majesty's servant with the title of Rajah, in consideration of the respectability attached to that situation, &c. Not being anxious for titular distinction, I have hitherto refrained from availing myself of the honour conferred on me by His Majesty.

His Majesty, however, being of opinion that it is essentially necessary for the dignity of His Royal House that I, as the representative thereof to the most powerful Monarch in Europe, and Agent for the settlement of His Majesty's affairs with the Honourable East India Company,

should be invested with the title above mentioned, has graciously forwarded to me a seal engraved for the purpose at Delhi. I therefore take the liberty of laying the subject before your Lordship, hoping that you will be pleased to sanction my adoption of such title accordingly. This measure will, I believe, be found consistent with former usage as established by a Resolution of Government on the subject in 1827, when, at the recommendation of the then Resident, Sir Charles Metcalfe, in his report of 26th June of that year, His Majesty's power of conferring honorary titles on his own servants was fully recognized.—I have the honour, &c.

Answer to this request was sent by Secretary Stirling on the 15th of January, to the effect that the Governor in Council could not sanction his acceptance of the title of Rajah nor recognise him as envoy from the Court of Delhi<sup>28</sup>. We can hardly wonder at this reply, when we remember that Rammohun's mission was at once a deviation from the usual official channels of communication with the Home Government and a reflection upon the conduct of officials. Both as to form and substance it stood condemned in the official eye. It is pleasant to find that this rebuff did not hinder Rammohun appearing next day at the Governor-General's with the Anti-Suttee address of congratulation.

With the beginning of the last year which Rammohun was to spend on Indian soil, the resentment which his reforming career had been steadily accumulating in the breasts of orthodox Hindus, broke out into threats and plots of mortal

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28. See J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and the Last Moghuls* Nos. 115 and 116, pp. 206-07. In this volume has been collected almost all the relevant records connected with Rammohun Roy's "Timur Mission", which makes it an invaluable work of reference.—*Editors*.



violence. It was the abolition of Suttee which let loose the floods of reactionary fury. Avarice and bigotry, two of the strongest passions of human nature, had been hard hit ; and they demanded a victim. Rammohun was marked out as the guilty party. He was the traitor within the gates, who had sold the keys to the infidel oppressor. Therefore he must die.

So doubtless argued his enemies. Their intentions were, however, conveyed to Rammohun. About the new year he informed Mr. Martin that "his life was seriously threatened by a gang of assassins." Mr. Martin accordingly took up his abode at his patron's house and armed the household. "Firearms, gunpowder, and daggers were immediately procured and burkendauzes employed to guard the premises." These last were daily exercised in firing. Whenever Rammohun went into town, he took with him dagger and swordstick, and was accompanied by Mr. Martin, who carried swordstick and pistols, and by other armed attendants\*. We learn from other sources

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\* So the scoffing writer in the *John Bull* quoted above whose narrative is too circumstantial to be readily open to doubt. [See the *John Bull* February 27, 1830, as quoted by the *Asiatic Journal* Vol. II, New Series (May to August 1830), *Asiatic Intelligence*, p. 202 : "...on or about the 2nd January, a new danger assailed the envoy and the presence of Mr. Martin at the house of Rammohun Roy became necessary, to protect him from assassination...Mr. Martin proposed to occupy the spare rooms of his house, and to arm the household in his defence ;...Fire-arms, gun-powder, and daggers were immediately procured and burkendauzes were employed to guard the premises. Mr. Martin it appears, procured a double-barrelled gun, a single-

that twice attempts were made on his life,<sup>29</sup> and he was dogged about by spies, who even dared to tear holes in his walls to watch him in his privacy, in the hope of detecting some act which would render him an out-caste.

The militant forces of reaction were organized by the *Dharma Sabha*, started, as we have seen, only six days before the opening of the *Brahma Sabha* building; and the antagonism between the two societies, each with an influential following, each with its popular newspaper, made a great stir, of which Sivanath Śāstri in his *History of the Brahmo Samaj* gives us this lively picture :<sup>30</sup>

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barrelled gun, three pair of pistols, a sabre and three sword-sticks etc. The burkendauzes were duly exercised in firing and one was armed with a kind of battle-axe, and thus the whole garrison was equipped and ready for defence. When the envoy during these perilous days, came into the town, Mr. Martin accompanied him armed at his special desire with a brace of pistols and a sword-stick, Rammohun himself having a naval dagger in his pocket, and a sword-stick in his hand, and his attendants also well-armed.....the anti Suttee-abolitionists were the dreaded enemies; and the cause of their enmity, the part that the envoy had taken in obtaining from government the suppression of this most cruel and horrid custom." Rammohun is called 'envoy' in the above passage, as he had been chosen ambassador by the King of Delhi. —Editors.]

29. Maharshi Debendranath Tagore refers to one attempt on Rammohun's life in his Bengali tract *Brāhma Samājer Pañchavimsati Vatsarer Parikshita Vrittānta* (New Edition, Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta, 1360 B. S.) p. 26.—Editors.

30. See Sivanath Śāstri *History of the Brahmo Samaj* Vol. I pp. 42-43. Another brief but interesting account of the



The common people became participators in the great conflict ; for the tracts of the reformers, mostly written in the simplest Bengali, appealed to them as much as to the enlightened classes. In the bathing-ghats of the river side, in market-places and public squares, in the drawing-rooms of influential citizens, everywhere the rivalry between the two associations became the subject of talk. Lines of comical poetry caricaturing the principles of the great reformer were composed by the wags of the time, and passed from mouth to mouth until the streets rang with laughter and ridicule. The agitation spread from Calcutta to the interior, and everywhere the the question was discussed between the two parties. A large number of Brahmins who accepted presents from the members of the *Brahmo Sabha*, were excommunicated by the other party on that account, and the duty of supporting them devolved upon the rich of Rammohun's friends, who cheerfully undertook it....It was in the midst of these furious party contests that Rammohun opened his church in 1830.

One of the favourite subjects of satire and ridicule was Rammohun's intended visit to Europe<sup>31</sup>.

It is no small tribute to the character of our hero that amid all this storm of obloquy and in peril of his life he calmly pursued his reforming course. Charges of cowardice and of time-serving have been plentifully hurled against him : but they find slight room for lodgement in the conduct of a man who, surrounded by virulent calumny and mortal menace, went on presenting

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'conflict' has been furnished by Rajnarayan Basu in his Bengali autobiography (*Atma-charit*), 2nd. Ed., Calcutta 1912, p. 6.  
—Editors.

31. For a few samples, see Brajendranath Banerji *Sambadpatre Sekaler Kathā* (Third Ed.) Vol. II pp. 479-83.  
—Editors.

addresses and publishing books and preparing memorials against Suttee, housed and endowed his *Sabha*, and even dared to launch Duff's great scheme of Christian education.

Nevertheless the "hatred, scoffing and abuse" to which he was subjected must have made him less sorry to leave India. How his plans for departure had matured appears from the following letter, in which the Hindu Reformer bids a stately farewell to the British ruler, whose name the abolition of Suttee has linked with his own in everlasting conjunction :

From the kindness I have so often experienced from your Lordship, I trust to be pardoned for my present intrusion in a matter solely concerning myself, but in which your Lordship's condescension has induced me to persuade myself that you are pleased to take some interest.

Having at length surmounted all the obstacles of a domestic nature that have hitherto opposed my long cherished intention of visiting England, I am now resolved to proceed to that land of liberty by one of the vessels that will sail in November, and from a due regard to the purport of the late Mr. Secretary Stirling's letter of 15th January last, and other considerations, I have determined not to appear there as the Envoy of His Majesty Akbar the Second, but as a private individual.

I am satisfied that in thus divesting myself of all public character, my zealous services in behalf of His Majesty need not be abated. I even trust that their chance of success may be improved by being thus exempted from all jealousy of a political nature to which they might by mis-apprehension be subjected.

As public report has fixed an early day in October for your Lordship's departure to examine personally into the condition of the inhabitants of the Upper Provinces, I take the present occasion as the last that may offer in this country for



the expression of my sincere wishes for your Lordship's success in all your philanthropic designs for the improvement and benefit of my countrymen. I need not add that any commands for England with which your Lordship may honour me shall receive from me the most respectful attention, and I beg to subscribe myself your Lordship's most humble and grateful servant.

The "obstacles of a domestic nature" may, perhaps, be the suit of the Raja of Burdwan, which was not finally dismissed by the last Court of Appeal—the Sudder Dewanee Adalat—until November of next year, but the issue of which may have been confidently foreseen.<sup>32</sup> It is interesting to know that, on leaving, Rammohun charged his sons to forget the conduct of their cousins who had shared in this forensic persecution.

Having completed all arrangements for his departure, Rammohun sailed from Calcutta by the

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32. Of the three suits filed against Rammohun by the Maharaja of Burdwan, the first (No. 3004) was dismissed by the Sadar Dewani Adalat, apparently on November 10, 1830, (26th Kartik, 1237 B.S.) (Chanda and Majumdar *Letters and Documents* No. 141, p. 305); the two others (Nos. 3005 and 3006) seem to have been disposed of in course of the next year, the last in the series (No. 3006) having been decided in Rammohun's favour on November 10, 1831. (Brajendranath Banerji *Samibadpatre Sekāler Kathā* Vol. II, Third Edition, pp. 500-03). The coincidence of the two dates is indeed striking. Nandamohun Chatterjee in his book of family anecdotes, asserts that good sense ultimately dawned upon the Maharaja of Burdwan and he personally approached Rammohun in order to end the dispute (*Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rāya Sammandhiya Kshudra Kshudra Galpa*, Second Edition, Calcutta, 1298 B. S. p. 62n).—Editors.

*Albion* on the 19th of November<sup>33</sup>. Careful even in this daring innovation on Brahman custom, to observe the laws of caste, he took with him Hindu servants to prepare his food and two cows to supply him with milk. Rammohun also took with him an adopted son, a boy of about twelve years, who was known as Ram Roy or Rajaram. Malicious gossip did not spare this lad's origin. Chandra-sekhar Dev—the disciple who, it will be remembered, suggested the formation of the Brahmo Samaj—stated in conversation with a friend, R. D. H.<sup>34</sup> at Burdwan, so late as January, 1863, that “rumour had it that at one time he [Rammohun] had a mistress ; and people believed that Rajaram was his natural son, though he himself said Rajaram was the orphan of a Durwan of some Saheb, and Rammohun Roy brought him up.”

This scandalous insinuation emerges here in our sources for the first and only time, and then some thirty years after Rammohun's death. We have not come across the remotest semblance of

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33. *John Bull*, February 27, 1830 as quoted by the *Asiatic Journal* Vol II. New series (May to August 1830), *Asiatic Intelligence*, p. 202, informs us that originally Rammohun had planned to leave for England in August or September, 1829, via Cuttack, Madras and Bombay. Circumstances delaying his departure, the plan was dropped ; next he decided to proceed to Allahabad and from there to leave India through Ranjit Singh's territories (i.e. the Punjab) ; this plan, also had ultimately to be abandoned due to the threats of assassination held out by his enemies. Thus it appears that on the *third* attempt he was successful in sailing directly from Calcutta.—*Editors*.

34. Apparently Rakhal Das Halder.—*Editors*.



evidence to sustain the charge. True, Mr. Dev was an intimate disciple ; but the rest of his reported conversation shows him to be no loyal admirer of the deceased master. And even he advanced no scintilla of proof. He merely repeated the gossip as "rumour" and what "people believed." There is no need to question his veracity. Orthodox Hindus of the Dharma Sabha type were thirsting to show up the great apostate, as they regarded him, in the blackest of colours. The fact that his wives had deserted him, and the presence of this adopted son, offered a combination of circumstances which eager malice could scarcely fail to construe in its own way. Men who made attempts on Rammohun's life were not likely to scruple about attacking his reputation. And against this rumour, so easily explained, we have to set the unanimous testimony of British missionaries to Rammohun's pure moral habits. An intimate friend like Mr. William Adam, who was closely questioned by Unitarian correspondents about Rammohun's domestic relations, could scarcely have been mistaken in his uniformly high estimate of the Reformer's character. And his aggrieved Trinitarian opponents, even in the heat of controversy, never breathe a whisper against his fair fame. The reputation that has passed scatheless and stainless the ordeal of criticism by missionaries, Baptist and Unitarian, Presbyterian and Anglican, hostile as well as sympathetic, may afford to ignore stale Hindu gossip served up a generation afterwards.<sup>35</sup>

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35. The "rumour" had been spread through some anonymous and filthy lampoons even in Rammohun's life-time. It

Rammohun was also accompanied by two Hindu servants, by name Ramhari Das and Ramratna Mukherji.<sup>36</sup> The latter as cook was entrusted with the duty of providing his master with food prepared in accordance with caste regulations.

Some extracts from Mr. J. Young's letter of introduction to Jeremy Bentham (of date November. 14, 1830) may fitly close this chapter :

If I were beside you, and could explain matters fully, you would comprehend the greatness of the undertaking—his going on board ship to a foreign and distant land, a thing hitherto not to be named among Hindoos, and least of all among Brahmins. His grand object, besides the natural one of satisfying his own laudable spirit of inquiry, has been to set a laudable example to his benighted countrymen ; and every one of the slow and gradual moves that he has made preparatory to his actually quitting India, has been marked by the same discretion of judgment. He waited patiently until he had by perseverance and exertion acquired a little but respectable party of disciples. He talked of going to England from year to year since 1823<sup>37</sup> to familiarize the minds of the orthodox by degrees to this step, and that his friends might in the meantime increase in numbers and in confidence... He now judges that the time is come, and that the public mind is prettty well ripe for his exploit...

The good which the excellent and extraordinary man has already affected by his writings and example cannot be

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is however absolutely without any positive foundation. See Note II at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*

36. He also took with him a Muslim attendant named Shaikh Bakhshu (Brajendranath Banerji *Rajah Rammohan Roy's Mission to England* pp. 22-23).—*Editors.*

37. We have seen that the idea was present in Rammohun's mind from the year 1816 or 1817 at the latest, for in that year he mentions it in a letter to Digby. See above, pp. 57, 64n.—*Editors.*



told. But for his exertions Suttee would be in full vigour at the present day, and the influence of the priesthood in all its ancient force ; – he has given the latter a shake from which, aided by education and the spirit of bold inquiry gone forth among the Hindoos, it can never recover....He is withal one of the most modest men I have ever met with...

It is no small compliment to such a man that even a Governor-General like the present, who, though a man of the most honest intentions, suspects everyone and trusts nobody, and who knows that R. M. R. greatly disapproves of many of the acts of the Government, should have shewn him so much respect as to furnish him with introductions to friends of rank and political influence in England.<sup>38</sup>

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38. Lord William Bentinck remained to the last, a great admirer of Rammohun. He donated a sum of Rupees Five Hundred to the Rammohun Memorial Fund when the death-news of the Indian reformer came to Calcutta and promised further contributions. See Brajendranath Banerji *Sambād-patre Sekalar Kathā*, Third Edition Vol. II p. 494.—Editors.

## SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

### I

The spread of education in India was a passion with Rammohun Roy. He was always eager to discuss the topic with friends and acquaintances and besides his own remarkable exertions in this field, there were occasions in his career when he had gladly come forward to support educational schemes sponsored by others. As early as 1816 or even before, he had offered Eustace Carey a piece of ground for a school (*Periodical Accounts relative to the Baptist Missionary Society* Vol. VI No. 31, June 1815 to January 1816, pp. 108n.-109n; cf. also above, p 114). In course of the debate held by the proprietors of the East India Company on July, 1824, at the East India House, over the question of Mr. Buckingham's banishment from India, Captain Gowan disclosed that he had received a letter from Rammohun Roy "relative to a subject which he (Capt. Gowan) had much at heart, namely the *foundation of some schools in India*, which was written with extra-ordinary talent, which letter he would read to the court (*italics ours—Editors ; Oriental Herald and Colonial Review* Vol. III, September to December, 1824, p. 124). Further Rammohun is known to have co-operated closely and enthusiastically with the Calcutta School Book Society (established 1817) in the latter body's efforts to help the cause of education by publishing suitable text-books. The third report of the Society's proceedings mention that Rammohun wrote a text-book on Geography in Bengali and English and submitted it to the Society for publication. We are further informed by the same source that he had undertaken in collaboration with Mr. Gordon, to revise the Bengali translation of Ferguson's *Introduction to Astronomy* prepared under the auspices of the Society (*The Third Report of the School Book Society's Proceedings : Third Year 1819-20*, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1820-21, pp. 7-8). Further, the seventh report of the Society



says : "The conviction that a *Bengalee Grammar*, better adopted to the instruction of native youths than the one on their list, has led your committee to solicit the services of Baboo Rammohun Roy in preparing one ; they are happy to report, that this gentleman has cheerfully engaged to give his immediate attention to the execution of this work" (*The Seventh Report of the Calcutta School Book Society's Proceedings : Eighth and Ninth Years, 1826-1827, Calcutta, 1828* p 4). This grammar in Bengali entitled *Gauḍīya Vyākaraṇa* was published by the Society in 1833 (cf. above, p. 193, footnote 22). In a Bengali article entitled "Yugaguru Rammohun" (*Viśvabhāratī Patrikā* Vol. X, No 1, Śravaṇa-Aśvin 1358 B. S. pp. 19-36), Pandit Kshitimohan Sen Śāstrī narrates his interesting reminiscences of Ramchandra Maulik, an old disciple of Rammohun Roy, aged 104, whom the writer met at Benares in August, 1900. Advised and inspired by Rammohun, Sī Maulik had dedicated his life (as he himself told Pandit Sen Śāstrī), to the task of spreading education among the illiterate masses of India. Rammohun is said to have told Sī Maulik that education was what India needed most at the time and the main emphasis in this field should be laid on the *education of the lower orders of society. No cooking would be possible unless the cauldron was heated from below.* (Pandit Kshitimohan Sen Śāstrī's article has been published in the form of a pamphlet by the Sādhanaśrama of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta, in 1952).

It will thus be seen that the sincere help and co-operation received by Dr. Alexander Duff from Rammohun Roy was nothing exceptional. It was a part of Rammohun's regular programme of philanthropic activities. We must also note, that Rammohun's conduct in this respect forms a pleasant contrast to that of his conservative Hindu opponents who had refused to cooperate with the Hindu College scheme, if Rammohun would have anything to do with it (cf. above, pp. 102-04) ! The managing body of the School Book Society included some of the most bitter orthodox opponents of Rammohun, including Raja Radhakanta Dev. That however did not prevent the philanthropist from giving that body his willing cooperation whenever necessary.

## II

Even in Rammohun's life-time filthy and anonymous lampoons had appeared in print suggesting that Rajaram Roy was the son of a muslim mistress. It should however be remembered that no opponent dared to bring this charge openly. There is not the slightest objective evidence anywhere in support of this accusation. It is well known that throughout Rammohun's career his enemies spared no pain to lower him in public estimate. In the context of the powerful assault delivered by Rammohun on the citadel of reaction and vested interest, all these instances of deliberate mud-slinging appear perfectly natural and explicable.

The history of Rajaram was supplied to Dr. Lant Carpenter in the following letter from India in 1835 : "You ask me to give you any corrections... that may appear necessary.... The boy Rajah whom he took with him to England is not his son, not even an adopted son according to the Hindoo form of adoption ; but a destitute orphan whom he was led by circumstances to protect and educate. I have a distinct recollection of the particular circumstance under which he stated to me Rajah came into his hands. And my recollection is confirmed by that of others. Mr. Dick, a civil servant of the Company, found the child helpless and forsaken at one of the fairs at Hurdwar, where from two to three thousand people annually congregated. It is not known whether the parents were Hindoos or Mussulmans, nor whether the parents lost or forsook him ; but Mr. Dick had him clothed and fed, and when he was under the necessity of leaving the country, for the recovery of his health, he consulted with Rammohun Roy how the child should be disposed of. I well recollect our friend's benevolent exclamation : 'When I saw an Englishman and a Christian, thus caring for the welfare of a poor orphan, could I, a native, hesitate to take him under my care and provide for him ? Mr. Dick never returned to India and the child remained with Rammohun Roy.....'" (Mary Carpenter *Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta Edition, 1915, p. 222).



There is no reason to disbelieve this very specific and circumstantial account. No known event of Rajaram's life ever gives the slightest indication that he was of Muslim descent. Rammohun brought him up in his own household with great care and affection, took him to England and gave him the best possible education. For a man who was as keen as Rammohun on conforming outwardly to the rules of caste, it would have been impossible in those days to give shelter in his own family an individual having Muslim blood in his veins ! It is again to be remembered that though his orthodox Hindu opponents condemned Rammohun as an outcaste—none of them ever suggested even faintly that he regarded the former's association with Rajaram, as one of the causes of his loss of caste. Rammohun's attitude to and relations with his foster-son had also been throughout frank, sincere and affectionate. There was nothing guilty or secretive about it. It is hardly possible to imagine that with his keen sense of public decorum, Rammohun would parade a "natural son" both in his own country as well as in England fully aware as he was, that such an act would irreparably damage his high moral reputation. Abuses and slanders hurled by mortal enemies with a deliberate and understandable purpose, have never been admitted as valid sources of history in the absence of independent corroborative testimony, and there is no reason why one should violate this elementary law of evidence in the case of Rammohun Roy.

It may interest the readers to know that Rammohun's enemies did not stop here. During the absence of the reformer in England they spread a further rumour that he was going to marry an English woman ! The *Samāchār Darpan*, November 3, 1832, came out with the following comment : “শ্রীরামমোহন রায় ।—আমাদের দৃষ্ট হইতেছে যে অনেকেই উন্নততা পূর্বক লিখিয়াছেন যে শ্রীযুত রামমোহন রায় ইঙ্গলণ্ডীয় এক বিবিসাহেবকে বিবাহকরনার্থ উদ্ভত হইয়াছেন ! কলিকাতায় রায়জীর এক স্ত্রী আছে এবং তিনি প্রকাশরূপে হিন্দুশাস্ত্রের কোন বিধি উল্লঙ্ঘন করাতে জাতিভ্রংশ বিষয়ে নিত্য অতি সাবধান হইয়া আছেন অতএব আমরা বোধ করি যে এই জনরব সমুদায়ই অমূলক ও অগ্রাহ্য । তিনি ঈদৃশাবস্থা অর্থাৎ স্ত্রী থাকিতে যদি

কোন বিবিসাহেবকে বিবাহ করিতে চেষ্টিত থাকেন তবে আমরা বোধ করি যে তাঁহার দৃঢ়তর বিপক্ষে রাগপূর্বক তাঁহার প্রতি যত গ্লানি তিরস্কার করিয়াছেন সে সকলেরই তিনি উপযুক্ত পাত্র বটেন।” (Banerji *Sambādpātre Sekāler Kathā*, Third Ed., Vol. II. pp. 485-86). This is indeed a revealing piece of canard. First, it clearly demonstrates to what length the opponents of Rammohun were capable of dragging their unscrupulous campaign of vilification against the reformer! Secondly, we should note that the calumnies spread against him, had not been believed by the writer in the *Darpan*, who cries out indignantly in the last sentence that if Rammohun marries an English woman, “*then* we shall know him to deserve all the other censures and accusations of his determined foes.” It is perhaps needless to add that this rumour about Rammohun’s attempt to contract a marriage in England was absolutely unfounded.

In recent times a rather desperate effort has been made by Mr. Brajendranath Banerji to prove the Muslim origin of Rajaram. He has argued from the absence of Rajaram’s name from the official list of Rammohun Roy’s companions on board the ship *Albion* that Rajaram must be identical with Shaikh Bakhshu, the muslim attendant who accompanied Rammohun to England and whose name appears on the passport granted separately to Rammohun’s servants (*Rajah Rammohun Roy’s Mission to England* p. 22n)! We have now no means of knowing why Rajaram’s name does not occur in the two orders of reception granted respectively to Rammohun and to his three other attendants. Possibly he had a separate order which is now missing from the file. In any case it is certainly not possible to jump to a positive conclusion from this absolutely negative premise in the manner Mr. Banerji has done, unless one allows oneself to be guided by some preconceived notions. However even this extremely weak hypothesis has now been convincingly demolished by Dr. J. K. Majumdar’s discovery of the return certificate of Shaikh Bakhshu, issued by W. Owen, captain of the ship “*Zenobia*” by which the former returned to Calcutta from London on or before the 7th February, 1833. The text of the certificate as



issued by Capt. Owen from Calcutta, on February 7, 1833, has been printed in Dr. Majumdar's *Raja Rammohun Roy and the Last Moghuls*, Appendix VII, p. 336. From English and Indian sources we know definitely that Rajaram Roy stayed on in England after Rammohun's death and returned to India by the ship "Java" in August 1838 (cf. *Samāchār Darpan*, August, 18, 1838, as quoted in Brajendranath Banerji's *Samibādpātre Sekāler Kathā* Third Ed., Vol. II p. 504) ! By no stretch of imagination therefore it is possible to identify the two !

It is really a remarkable though tragic fact that through ages Indian orthodoxy has resorted to a common line of action in traducing progressive thinkers of the country. We may recall that members of hostile sects did not hesitate to cast aspersion on the moral character of Buddha during the life-time of the Śākya Sage, with the help of unscrupulous women like Chīnchā and Sundarī (Thomas *The Life of Buddha* Third Edition, London, 1949, pp. 111-12 ; Amulya Chandra Sen *Buddha-Kathā* in Bengali, Calcutta, 1955, pp. 138-39 ; 141-42). Tradition among the Kabir Panthis asserts that orthodox Brahmins had brought the charge of association with a woman of ill fame against the medieval Indian saint Kabir (Westcott, *Kabir and the Kabir Panth*, Second Edition, Calcutta, 1953, p. 11). Pandit Kshitimohan Sen Śāstri has pointed out how scheming votaries of conservatism planned to declare Dhedhraj, a daring social reformer of northern India and a contemporary of Rammohun,—the father of illegitimate children (*Visvabhārati Patrika* Vol. X, No. 1, p. 32). In our own days we have witnessed similar attempts at throwing mud on the moral character of Mahatma Gandhi ! The attack on Rammohun, it is easy to see, fits unto the familiar pattern and demonstrates the working of the same age-old psychology. One can however confidently hope that as in the cases of the other savants named, posterity would regard the unfounded charge against Rammohun as unworthy of serious consideration.

Very little is known of the career of Rajaram after his return from England. While in England, he was employed as an extra clerk under the Board of Control in 1835, which post he held for three years. On his return to India in 1838,

he was appointed examiner in the Secret and Political Department of the Government, on a monthly salary of Rs 200/-. For sometime he became associated with the Brahmo Movement and was a member of the *Tattvabodhini Sabha* established by Maharshi Debendranath Tagore in 1839 (Jogananda Das in the *Pravāsi*, Chaitra, 1345 B.S. p. 838 ; Dilip Kumar Biswas in the *Itihas* Vol. V, No. 1, p. 42 ; Prabhat Chandra Ganguli, *Rammohnn-Prasaṅga* pp. 59-61). It appears however that in later life he embraced Christianity (cf. *Hindoo Patriot*, February 3, 1862, quoted in Banerji *Sanibādpatre Sekāler Kathā*, Third Edition, Vol. II, p 774). He seems to have died early. We do not unfortunately know the year of his death.



## CHAPTER VIII

( 1830-1833 )

### EMBASSY TO EUROPE

1830. November 19—Rammohun sails from Calcutta.
1831. January—Calls at Cape Town. April 8—Arrives in Liverpool, visits Manchester, and reaches London. May and July—Resides in Regent Street. May—addresses Unitarian Association. July 6—Dines with East India Company. Removes residence to Bedford Square. August 19—*Revenue System of India*. September 19—*Judicial System of India*. September 28—*Condition of India*. September—Is presented to the King.
1832. June—Reform Bill finally passed. July—14—*Settlement of India by Europeans*. October—Rammohun Roy in Paris.
1832. January—In London again. First Reformed Parliament meets. July 11—Appeal against the abolition of Suttee rejected by Parliament. July 24—East India Bill read a third time in the Commons. August 20—Received Royal Assent. Slavery Emancipation Act. Factory Act. September—R. Roy leaves London for Stapleton Hill, near Bristol. September 9—Mr. Estlin called in. September 27—Death of R. Roy. October 18—His Burial.

The significance of Rammohun Roy's visit to Europe can scarcely be exaggerated. At first sight indeed it is in some danger of being overlooked. We are tempted to consider the last three years of the Reformer's life a mere appendix or postscript to a career already complete. We are apt to suppose the full tale of his great services for

India made up when he left her soil. He had initiated the Hindu Theistic movement. He had given it permanent literary expression. He had selected or indicated the order of Scriptures more peculiarly its own. He had seen it finally housed and endowed. He had moreover successfully inaugurated native journalism. He had launched Dr. Duff's great educational enterprise. The cause of English education which he had championed was now on the eve of official victory. And he had witnessed the abolition of Suttee. What follows these achievements may wear to the unreflective observer a semblance of anti-climax, or at best of mere stage pageant after the real work was done. But a deeper discernment will soon dissipate this impression. Rammohun's three years in the West form the crown and consummation of his life-work. They were spent away from the scene of his regular labours and under widely different conditions ; they were shadowed by failing health and saddened by misplaced confidence ; but they follow in strict logical and genetic succession. They complete the continuity. They supply the dramatic culmination of Rammohun's half century of service to his country and his kind.

The epoch they mark in Hindu development only confirms and extends his religious record. He was the first Brāhman to cross the ocean.<sup>1</sup> He

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1. Two Brāhmins from Bombay are said to have visited England about forty years before Rammohun Roy (cf. *Samāchār Darpan*, November 20, 1830, in Banerji *Sambādpātre Sekāler Kathā*, Third Ed., Vol. II, p. 474). They were however obscure individuals and their journey did not create any commotion in this country.—*Editors*.



was the first Hindu of eminence who dared to break the spell which for ages the sea had laid on India. He set a conspicuous precedent to the host of educated Hindus who have since studied and travelled in Europe. The consequences for his countrymen are such as to make this act alone sufficient to secure for its author a lasting distinction. Its Imperial importance is not less striking. Rammohun Roy's presence in this country made the English people aware, as they had never been before, of the dignity, the culture, and the piety of the race they had conquered in the East. India became incarnate in him, and dwelt among us, and we beheld her glory. In the court of the King, in the halls of the legislature, in the select coteries of fashion, in the society of philosophers and men of letters, in Anglican church and Nonconformist meeting-house, in the privacy of many a home, and before the wondering crowds of Lancashire operatives, Rammohun Roy stood forth the visible and personal embodiment of our Eastern empire. Wherever he went, there went a stately refutation of the Anglo-Indian insolence which saw in an Indian fellow-subject only a "black man" or a "nigger." As he had interpreted England to India, so now he interpreted India to England. He was the first great representative of the Hindu race at the Seat of Empire, and the contrast between official London and official Calcutta in their treatment of him showed the effect of his personal presence at headquarters.

He came, too, at a time of crucial transition in the political history of the United Kingdom. He was an eager and sympathetic spectator of the

stupendous revolution achieved by the first Reform Bill. The process then began which has by successive extensions of the franchise transformed the government of this nation in fifty years from a close oligarchy to a democracy. While he was here, he saw the East India Company changed by statute from a trading concern into a political organization : and that was practically the last renewal of its charter, prior to its replacement, in 1858, by the Imperial Government.\* He saw the Act pass which abolished slavery throughout the British dominions. The period of his visit also covers the passing of the Factory Act and the beginnings of the Tractarian movement. The Manchester and Liverpool railway had been opened only a month or two before he left India. He was here, in a word, when the New England was being born out of the heart of Old England,—the New England of democracy, of social and industrial reform, of Anglican revival, and of Imperial policy tempered by Nonconformist Conscience. And at that decisive era, he was present as the noble and precocious type of the New India which has been growing up under British rule. In him the New England first became acquainted with the New India. That is a connection which has already borne much fruit, and which seems destined to play a greater part in the near future. And if we glance beyond the limits of India and of Empire, we can hardly fail to see in Rammohun's visit a landmark in the general history of modern civilization. The

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\* The charter was tentatively renewed, subject to the pleasure of Parliament, in 1853.



West had long gone to the East. With him the East began to come to the West. India has followed in his wake, and Japan and even China have followed in the wake of India. Leading scions of the hoariest civilizations are now eager pupils in the schools of the youngest civilizations. As a consequence the East is being rapidly Occidentalized ; and there are signs, not a few, of a gradual Orientalizing of the West. This movement towards the healing of the schism which has for ages divided mankind, and the effort to intermingle more thoroughly the various ingredients of humanity, are rich in promise for the humanizing and unifying of man. The role which Rammohun Roy had played in this world-drama among his own countrymen was fitly crowned by his appearance in the chief city of the globe.

We are anticipating, it is true, but in following the kaleidoscopic variety of the reformer's European experiences we need to keep clearly in mind the world-historic import of the entire event. Otherwise the unity and continuity of a great lifework might seem to be dissipated in a crowd of details.

The cosmopolitan character of the man received fresh and striking illustration from the direction of his mind during the time of his departure. He was not weighed down with the thought of separation from home and friends, or with vague forebodings as to the outcome of his momentous enterprise. He was simply full of the latest French Revolution. News had just reached Calcutta of the famous Three Days ( July 27—29, 1830 ) : and, "so great was his enthusiasm that," we are told, "he could think and

talk of nothing else !” He viewed it as a triumph of liberty and rejoiced accordingly.<sup>2</sup>

This is the testimony of James Sutherland, a friend of Rammohun, who sailed with him to England. His narrative of the voyage\* sheds so interesting a light on the conduct of the great Hindu that we cannot do better than reproduce portions of it here :

On ship-board Rammohun Roy took his meals in his own cabin, and at first suffered considerable inconvenience from the want of a separate fireplace, having nothing but a common *choola* on board. His servants, too, fell desperately sea-sick, (though, as if his ardour supported him against it, he himself never felt this malady at all) and took possession of his cabin, never moving from it, and making it as may easily be conceived, no enviable domicile ; in fact they compelled him to retreat to the lockers ; but still the kindness of his nature would not allow him to remove them. The greater part of the day he read, chiefly I believe, Sanskrit and Hebrew. In the forenoon and the evening he took an airing on deck, and always got involved in an animated discussion. After dinner when the cloth was removed and the dessert was on the table, he would come out of his cabin also and join in the conversation and take a glass of wine. He was always cheerful and so won upon the esteem of all on board that there was quite a competition who should pay him the most attention, and even the sailors seemed to render him any little service in their power. . . His equanimity was

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2. James Sutherland in his reminiscences of Rammohun Roy published in the *India Gazette*, February 18, 1834, and reprinted in the *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 57, No. 1, p. 61. Rammohun’s warm sympathies for the ideals of revolution all over the world are well-known. See Supplementary Note II to Chapter IV above, pp. 161-63.—*Editors*.

\* Published in the *India Gazette*, February 18, 1834. (Reprinted in the *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 57, No. 1, October 1935, pp. 58-70.—*Editors*.)



quite surprising. In more than one case everything in his cabin was quite afloat owing to the sea washing in . . . but it never disturbed his serenity. If anything threw him off his equilibrium of temperament, it was the prevalence of contrary winds, because of his anxiety to get on, and his alarm lest the great question of the Company's charter should come on before he arrived in England.

He put ashore at the Cape for only an hour or two. Returning on board, he met with a nasty accident. The gangway ladder had not been properly secured and he got a serious fall, "from which he was lame for eighteen months afterwards" and indeed never finally recovered.

But no bodily suffering could repress his mental ardour, Two French frigates, under the revolutionary flag, the glorious tri-colour, were lying in Table Bay ; and lame as he was, he would insist on visiting them. The sight of these colours seemed to kindle the flame of his enthusiasm, and to render him insensible to pain. . . . His reception was, of course, worthy of the French character and of him. He was conducted over the vessels and endeavoured to convey by the aid of interpreters how much he was delighted to be under the banner that waved over their decks,—an evidence of the glorious triumph of right over might ; and as he left the vessels he repeated emphatically "Glory, glory, glory to France !"

Some of the most distinguished people at the Cape left their cards for him at the Hotel, and some called on board, but not the Governor . . .

As we approached England, his anxiety to know what was passing there became most urgent, and he implored the captain to lose no opportunity of speaking to any vessel outward-bound. At length near the Equator, . . . we fell in with a vessel which supplied us with papers announcing the change of Ministry† and his exultation at the intelligence may be easily conceived.

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† Lord Grey succeeded the Duke of Wellington as Prime Minister in November, 1830.

We talked of nothing else for days...It was in its probable beneficial effect on the fate of India that he regarded the event as a subject of triumph. When we got within a few days' sail of the Channel we fell in with a vessel only four days out, that brought us intelligence of the extraordinary circumstance of the second reading of the Reform Bill being carried in the House in which the Tories had so long commanded majorities, by a single vote !...Rammohun Roy was again elated with the prospect....A few days afterwards, at that eventful crisis in our history....Rammohun Roy first landed in Great Britain.

The effect of this contagious enthusiasm of a whole people in favour of a grand political change upon such a mind as his was of course electrifying, and he caught up the tone of the new society in which he found himself with so much ardour that at one time I had fears that this fever of excitement... would prove too much for him...

Mr. Sutherland gives a vivid description of the first days of Rammohun Roy in England.<sup>3</sup> He tells us :

His arrival was no sooner known in Liverpool than every man of any distinction in the place hastened to call upon him, and he got into inextricable confusion with all his engagements, making half a dozen sometimes for the same evening...He was out morning, noon, and night...On all occasions, whether at breakfast or dinner, a number of persons was assembled to meet him ; and he was constantly involved in animated discussions on politics or theology.

The first public place Rammohun Roy attended was fitly enough a Unitarian Chapel, where a Mr. Grundy delivered a sermon "rather too metaphy-

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3. Rammohun landed at Liverpool on April 8th, 1831. He was at once invited by Mr. William Rathbone to take up his residence at 'the hospitable abode of Greenbank'. He preferred however to be independent and put up at Radley's Hotel (Mary Carpenter *Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy* p. 78).—Editors.



sical" for Mr. Sutherland, but greatly appreciated by the illustrious Hindu. It was a homily on the duty of unlimited charity in regard to other men's creeds.

"When the sermon was over the scene that ensued was curious. Instead of dispersing as usual, the congregation thronged up every avenue in crowding to get a near view of him as he passed out." On his way out, Rammohun was moved to sudden grief by the sight of a mural tablet in memory of a Mr. Tait whom he had known in India. On recovering from the shock,

He attempted to express his feelings, and as he did so with propriety, though with hesitation, the surprise and excitement of the crowd at hearing a native of India address them in their native tongue was extreme, and it was near an hour after the service terminated ere we could make our way out of church...He had to shake hands with many who had waited for that purpose. To some his adopted son was scarcely less an object of curiosity, and to him it was fine fun ; he seemed to enjoy being stared at amazingly.

At night Rammohun Roy went to an Anglican church and heard the Rev. Mr. Scoresby, formerly a sailor, and now a man of great scientific reputation, and a good Evangelical. Of this discourse, too, the distinguished hearer expressed his admiration.

Among the earliest invitations received by Rammohun after his arrival was one to the house of William Roscoe. The venerable historian, who had been a prisoner through paralysis for many years, and was now within a few weeks of his end, had previously corresponded with Rammohun, read his writings, and earnestly longed to see him. The

interview which resulted is described as exceedingly affecting.<sup>4</sup>

The first impression produced by the Hindu in the drawing-rooms of Liverpool magnates, as well as in more public places, seems to have been one of profound surprise.

To hear a Brahman zealously advocating Reform, and, with an earnestness and emphasis that bespoke his sincerity, expatiating on the blessings of civil and religious liberty, of course amazed our countrymen; and perhaps they were not less surprised, if the discussion took a religious turn, to find him quoting text upon text with the utmost facility, and proving himself more familiar with their sacred books than themselves.

Two wealthy Quaker families, Cropper and Benson by name, paid him special attention, and brought him into social fellowship with persons of all faiths. At one of these Quaker parties "there were High Churchmen, Baptists, Unitarians, and Deists, all meeting in perfect harmony and Christian charity". At the house of Mr. William Rathbone he met the phrenologist Spurzheim, with whom personally he was on excellent terms, but for whose "science" he had only good-humoured ridicule. Theology and politics were, as has been said, the favourite themes of colloquy; but an attempt—at Mr. Rathbone's—to draw Rammohun into confession of his own precise religious conviction ended in failure.

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4. For a touching description of the interview, see Henry Roscoe's *Life of William Roscoe* Vol. II, pp. 413-20, quoted in Mary Carpenter's *Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta 1915, pp. 79-86; Cf. also James Sutherland's reminiscences, *Calcutta Review* Vol. 57, No. 1, pp. 64-65.—Editors.



The Rajah stayed only a few days in Liverpool. He was eager to be present in the House of Commons on the second reading of the Reform Bill. So he hurried on to London about the end of April. But his stay in Liverpool was a fitting prelude to the general tenor of his visit, and has therefore claimed slightly fuller notice.

The *éclat* of his first reception followed him on his way to the metropolis. Says Mr. Sutherland :

The scene at Manchester, when he visited the great manufactories, was very amusing. All the workmen, I believe, struck work, and men, women, and children rushed in crowds to see "*the King of Ingee*" ! Many of the great unwashed insisted upon shaking hands with him ; some of the *ladies* who had not stayed to make their toilets very carefully wished to embrace him, and he with difficulty escaped.....The aid of the police was required to make way for him to the manufactories, and when he had entered, it was necessary to close and bolt the gate to keep out the mob.....After shaking hands with hundreds of them he turned round and addressed them, hoping they would all support the King and his Ministers in obtaining Reform ; so happily had he caught the spirit of the people. He was answered with loud shouts, "The King and Reform for ever !" On the road to London, wherever he stopped, the inn was surrounded.

On the night of his arrival in the capital a rare honour awaited him. He got into London late in the evening, and being dissatisfied with the rooms assigned him in "a filthy inn in Newgate Street," went on to the Adelphi Hotel which he reached about ten o'clock. He had not told his friends when he was coming, but they had learned from other sources, and had prepared rooms for him at an hotel in Bond Street,

Yet, strange to say, long after he had retired to rest, the venerable Bentham, who had not for many years called on anyone or left his house, I believe, except to take his habitual walk in the garden, found his way to the hotel, and left a characteristic note for him.

This signal compliment from the leading British philosopher of the time must have greatly gratified the stranger.<sup>5</sup>

Rammohun took up his residence at 125 Regent Street, and for some months held court there as real, if informal, Ambassador from the people of India.

As soon (says Sutherland) as it was known in London that the great Brahman philosopher had arrived, the most distinguished men in the country crowded to pay their respects to him ; and he had scarcely got into his lodgings in Regent Street, when his door was besieged with carriages from eleven in the morning till four in the afternoon ; until this constant state of excitement (for he caught the tone of the day and vehemently discussed politics with everyone ) actually made him ill, . . . when his physicians gave positive orders to his footman not to admit visitors.

He became, in short, the lion of the season, and the Dowager Duchess of Cork, a noted lion-hunter, early marked him out for her prey. Mr. Sutherland comments with surprise upon Rammohun's being "for a considerable time much more in Tory than in Whig circles", even being introduced into the House of Lords by the Duke of Cumberland. It was his urgent solicitations which

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5. A very warm friendship had grown up between Jeremy Bentham and Rammohun Roy. The former was an ardent admirer of the latter and Rammohun also held the venerable British philosopher in high respect. For their correspondence, see Appendix VI.—*Editors*.



prevented the Tory peers voting against the Indian Jury Bill. Considering the round terms in which he rated the Tories to their face for opposing the Reform Bill, their hospitable behaviour towards him does them no small credit. "With Lord Brougham", Sutherland tells us, "he was on terms of the closest and most confidential intimacy<sup>6</sup>; and, in short, he was honoured and esteemed by men of the most opposite opinions".

That he should have been in great demand among the Unitarians, with whose leaders he had corresponded for years, and whose cause at home and abroad he had done so much to promote, was of course inevitable. He had not been long in London before a special meeting of the Unitarian Association was held in his honour.\* He was welcomed by Dr. Carpenter and others as 'brother' and 'fellow-labourer'. Rammohun had not yet recovered from the illness which his excessive popularity had brought on him, and responded with manifest exhaustion. A few sentences may be quoted from his brief speech :

'With respect to your faith I may observe that I too believe in one God, and that I believe in almost all the doctrines that you do ; but I do this for my own salvation and for my

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6 William Roscoe had given Rammohun a letter of introduction to Lord Brougham (Henry Roscoe's *Life of William Roscoe* Vol. II, quoted in Mary Carpenter's *Last Days* pp. 84-86).—Editors.

\* Probably in May. The proceedings are fully reported in the *Monthly Repository* for June, 1831. (Long extracts from these including the report of Rammohun's speech, have been quoted in Mary Carpenter's *Last Days* pp. 92-100.—Editors.)

own peace.' 'I have honour for the appellation of Christian.' 'Scripture seconds your system of religion, common sense is always on your side.' 'I am convinced that your success sooner or later is certain.'

Rammohun continued to the last in close communication or personal fellowship with the chief Unitarian families of the time, the Estlins, the Carpenters, the Foxes, and the like. We have a letter of his to Rev. W. J. Fox,\* dated May 31, 1831, acknowledging with truly Oriental courtesy certain books which the author had sent him, and hoping for an interchange of visits "as soon as I am fully recovered"; and on June 10th, a note assuring Mr. Fox "it will give me more real gratification to visit you in your cottage, as you call it, than to visit a palace. But as I happen to be engaged for dinner every day till the 19th, I would prefer seeing you at breakfast....." This shows us something of the throng of social engagements which claimed Rammohun. The visit to breakfast was finally arranged, as we learn from a note of June 13th, in which the Rajah says, "I shall endeavour to bring my little youngster with me, agreeably to your kind request." He also thanks Mr. Fox for the sermon sent him, adding, "After the discourse which I had the supreme gratification of hearing delivered by you, I must read anything that comes from your pen both with interest and instruction." A note to his booksellers, of May 1, 1832, shows that he was a regular subscriber to the *Monthly*

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\* Editor of the *Monthly Repository*, friend and patron of Robert Browning, whose youthful Muse he was at this very time sedulously encouraging; he might almost be called the first man of any literary standing who discovered the poet.



*Repository*, the Unitarian organ. He frequently attended Unitarian places of worship. But Unitarians found, to their considerable surprise, that he was by no means prepared to identify himself wholly with their cause. His first Sunday in England was typical. He divided his attendance between Unitarian and Anglican churches. In fact the balance seemed latterly to turn in favour of the Anglican. It was no Unitarian divine, but the Rev. Dr. Kenney, the "Established" incumbent of St. Olaves, Southwark, whom Rammohun Roy came to style "his parish priest." The ground assigned for this choice is the Hindu's "benignity, charity, liberality to the creeds of others, and honesty in the great political struggle for Reform." There is a dash of humour about the fact of the author of *Reasons for 'frequenting a Unitarian place of worship instead of the numerously attended established Churches'* coming round in the end to style an Established clergyman his "parish priest". But of this more anon.

Rammohun's political sagacity in supposing that his influence would tell more decisively for India through his personal if unofficial presence in London than through the usual official channels connecting the subject race with the supreme government, was abundantly confirmed by the event. Whatever flaw official etiquette might find in the validity of his credentials was more than covered by the acceptance which the ultimate authority accorded to his mission. It is said\* that Ministers

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\* By the *Asiatic Journal*, Vol. XII, New Series, (September to December, 1833), Part I. p. 206.

of the Crown "recognised his embassy and his title" as the ennobled representative of the Emperor of Delhi. But the much more important fact was that the people of England, in their own spontaneous way, acknowledged him as Ambassador from the people of India. And this fact, however trying to official nerves, could not be ignored. The East India Company did indeed adhere stiffly to its refusal to recognise him either as Envoy from Delhi or as Rajah. But it could no longer afford to treat him as cavalierly as it had treated him in Calcutta. Mr. Sutherland remarks somewhat sardonically on the striking alteration in their demeanour to Rammohun Roy which his reception in England effected among the Anglo-Indian officials. The very same men who had treated him with scorn in India now eagerly courted his acquaintance. The change of attitude was conspicuously signalized on the 6th of July, 1831, when a dinner was given to the distinguished stranger by the East India Company. "It was what was called a family dinner in contradistinction to the grand feast given upon the eve of the departure of a Governor for India."† It was nevertheless quite a State affair. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Company presided, and some four-score guests were present. In proposing the toast of the evening the Chairman chiefly indulged in personal eulogy, but added the hope that Rammohun's reception would encourage other 'able and influential' Hindus to visit England.

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† *Asiatic Journal* Vol. V, New Series (May to August, 1831), Part II (Asiatic and Home Intelligence), pp. 236-37, from whose report of the dinner at the City of London Tavern the particulars next mentioned are taken.



Rammohun in reply was equally discreet. 'That day was one,' he said, 'to which he had looked forward with the greatest degree of expectation. It rejoiced him to be seated amongst a body of gentlemen who had with such humanity and kindness carried on the government of India.' He contrasted the sanguinary anarchy which had prevailed in India prior to the advent of the British with its present peace and progress. 'He felt most grateful to the various illustrious persons who had filled from time to time the office of Governor-General,—to Lords Cornwallis, Wellesly, and Hastings, (he is careful not to mention Lord Amherst),—ay and to Lord William Bentinck, who 'had done all in his power to gain the good opinion of the natives of India and so raise them in the scale of nations. He felt proud and grateful at what India was experiencing,' and hoped she would ever enjoy a government equally popular, kind, conciliatory, and human.

The chronicler observes that "it was rather curious to see the Brahman surrounded by hearty feeders upon turtle and venison and champagne, and touching nothing himself but rice and cold water."

This public honour would certainly not lessen the influence which Rammohun possessed as an authority on all Indian questions. It was only natural that the Select Committee of the House of Commons which was appointed in February and re-appointed in June to consider the renewal of the Company's Charter should invite him to appear before it. This request Rammohun declined, but tendered his evidence in the form

of successive "Communications to the Board of Control," which besides duly appearing in the Blue Books were published by him in a separate volume.\* The first of these was dated August 19, 1831, and dealt with the Revenue. It consists of two parts, one setting forth the facts and remedies proposed in question and answer, the other a summary paper of proposals. Rammohun here appears as the champion of the rack-rented ryot, or cultivator. While the Zemindars or landholders had been greatly benefited by the Perpetual Settlement of 1793, while their wealth and the wealth of the community generally had increased, the poor cultivator was no better off. "Such is the melancholy condition of the agricultural labourers," he wrote, "that it always gives me the greatest pain to allude to it." The remedy he asked for was in the first place the prohibition of any further rise in rent, and secondly—rents being now so exorbitantly high as to leave the ryot in a state of extreme misery,—a reduction in the revenue demanded from the zemindar so as to ensure a reduction in the ryot's rent. The decrease in revenue he would meet by increasing taxes upon luxuries, or by employing as collectors low-salaried natives instead of high-salaried

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\* *Exposition of the Practical Operation of the Judicial and Revenue Systems of India, and of the General Character and Condition of its Native Inhabitants as submitted in Evidence to the Authorities in England.*—Smith, Elder & Co. London, 1832. (It has been asserted by some that this volume does not contain all that Rammohun communicated to the Board of Control. See on this point Note I at the end of the Chapter.—Editors.)



Europeans. He also approved of the settlement in India of a few model landlords from England, but was careful to stipulate that they should not be drawn from the lower classes. He concluded with an earnest appeal "to any and every authority to devise some mode of alleviating the present miseries of the agricultural peasantry of India."

In an appendix he urged the Imperial utility of this policy. To recognise the indefeasible rights of the ryot in the soil would make him loyal to the power that secured them. "The saving that might be effected by this liberal and generous policy, through the substituting of a militia force for a great part of the present standing army, would be much greater than any gain that could be realized by any system of increasing land revenue." This argument was backed up by a quotation from Saadi, which puts Rammohun's ideal for British rule in India in a nutshell :

Be on friendly terms with thy subjects.  
And rest easy about the warfare of thine enemies ;  
For to an upright prince his people is an army.

Throughout this communication the spokesman of the New India showed himself once more to be no mere advocate of the moneyed and educated classes, but the real tribune of the toiling and oppressed poor.

In his *Questions and Answers on the Judicial System of India*, which was dated September 19, 1831, he proposed many and extensive reforms. Among the principal measures he advocated were the substitution of English for Persian as the official language of the courts of law ; the appointment of

native assessors in the civil courts ; trial by jury, of which the Panchayet system was the native parallel ; separation of the offices of judge and revenue commissioner ; separation of judge and magistrate ; codification of the criminal law and also of the civil law of India ; and consultation with the local magnates before enacting laws.

His *Additional Queries respecting the condition of India*, dated September 28, 1831, contained much valuable information. He recommended at the outset that "if the people of India were to be induced to abandon their religious prejudices and thereby become accustomed to the frequent and common use of a moderate proportion of animal food, the physical qualities of the people might be very much improved."<sup>7</sup> The moral condition of the people he found to be good at a distance from large towns and head-stations and courts of law ; bad among townsfolk ; and still worse among clerks of courts, zemindars' agents, and the like. The people generally possessed "the same capability of improvement as any other civilized people." Those about the courts of princes rather carried their

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7. It was a pet theory of Rammohun. Cf. Preface to the First Edition of the *Brahmical Magazine* (The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy edited by Kalidas Nag and Debajyoti Burman, Part II p. 138) ; also *Brāhmaṇa Sevadhi* No. 1 (Rammohun's *Collected Bengali Works*, Sahitya Parishad Ed. No. 5, p. 4). It may be recalled in this connection that Rammohun recommended a regular meat-diet to young Debendranath Tagore (Cf. Maharshi Debendranath Tagore's reminiscences of Rammohun Roy in *The Father of Modern India : Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume* Part II p. 174).—Editors.



politeness to an inconvenient extent. He declared the ancient families to be "decidedly disaffected" to British rule, and urged that the only policy which could ensure the attachment of the intelligent natives was to make them eligible for gradual promotion, by merit and ability, to situations of trust and respectability in the State.

In this same month of September, Rammohun Roy was presented to the King and added to his other distinctions that of being the first Brahman received at the British court. The incident is one that lends itself to the art of a great historical painter. The ceremony was the picturesque token of a significant moment in the evolution of empire.

Rammohun was now a fully fledged member of the highest circles of society. Perhaps it was at this time that he was induced to depart from the "perfectly unostentatious" style of living which was to him habitual. "For a short time, about three months," according to Sutherland, "he had yielded to advice that was anything but disinterested, and taken up his residence in a most magnificent abode in Cumberland Terrace, Regent's Park, where he lived extravagantly."\* Under the advice that was not

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\* *The India Gazette*, February 18, 1834. We have letters of Rammohun Roy, dated 125 Regent Street, up to June 13, 1831, and letters of his dated from 48 Bedford Square, from January 27, 1832; so that this interval of extravagant residence must have fallen between those dates. Arnot says that most of Rammohun Roy's papers on the Judicial and Revenue System were written in Regent Street; which points to the removal to Cumberland Terrace taking place in or about September.

disinterested, Mr. Sutherland is evidently referring to a man of whom we have heard before and who comes into unpleasant prominence in connection with the closing scenes of Rammohnn's career. Mr. Sandford Arnot was acting as assistant editor to Mr. Buckingham on the staff of the *Calcutta Journal* in 1823, when that newspaper roused the wrath of Acting Governor-General Adams, and when consequently he had to follow his chief into banishment from India.<sup>8</sup> On Rammohun's arrival in England, Mr. Sandford Arnot, doubtless on the strength of old acquaintance, was engaged as his secretary, and seems to have generally accompanied him†.

Unless this quondam journalist has been shamefully traduced, he was a low, cunning parasite. Having fastened on a rich and generous patron, whose position in a strange land made him peculiarly dependent on the guidance of British friends, he turned the opportunity without scruple to his own sordid account. In this as in other instances Rammohun showed himself—probably through excess of good nature—lacking in a wise choice of friends.

Not that he was by any means a slave to the caprice of those he had chosen ; as was shown in

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8. It has been noticed earlier that Mr. Arnot was not the *assistant editor* of the *Calcutta Journal* but merely an *assistant* in the general staff of the paper. See above. p. 175, footnote 7.—*Editors*.

† "As I may be accompanied by a European friend and two servants, I will lodge at some hotel in your immediate neighbourhood." R. Roy to J. B. Estlin, in a letter dated May 10, 1831.



this very matter of residence. Sutherland tells us that "his good sense soon prevailed over this folly" of an extravagant establishment :

He abandoned this splendid mansion and went to live with Mr. Hare, the brother of Mr. David Hare\* of Calcutta, in Bedford Square, where he continued while he was in London. He kept a plain chariot, with a coachman and footman in neat liveries ; in fact adopted and adhered to the style of a private gentleman of moderate fortune, though still courted by the first men in the kingdom.

Of the stately figure which so much impressed London society, it may be well to reproduce here two portraits drawn by different hands. The first is by his friend Mr. Sutherland, writing in the *India Gazette*, February 18, 1834. He says :

Rammohun Roy surpassed the generality of his countrymen in his personal appearance almost as much as in his mental powers. In his prime of manhood his figure was beyond the common height, and was stout and muscular in proportion. His countenance wore an expression of blended dignity and benevolence that charmed at first sight and put his visitors at their ease, while it checked an irreverent familiarity. In the latter part of his life, which closed in his sixtieth year, his manly figure began to droop, perhaps not so much from age as the weight of thought and the toil of study. But his fine dark eye, though it lost something of its fire, retained its intelligence and amenity to the last.

The other sketch is by "R. M. M.,"<sup>9</sup> and appeared in the *Court Journal* for October 5 1833 :

The Rajah, in the outer man, was cast in nature's finest mould ; his figure was manly and robust : his carriage dignified : the forehead towering, expansive and commanding : the eye dark, restless, full of brightness and animation, yet liquid and

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\* The old comrade of Rammohun in Calcutta, in the struggle for the higher education of the natives.

9. Mr. Robert Montgomery Martin—*Editors*.

benevolent and frequently glistening with a tear when affected by the deeper sensibility of the heart ; the nose of Roman form and proportions : lips full and indicative of independence ; the whole features deeply expressive, with a smile of soft and peculiar fascination which won irresistibly the suffrages to whom it was addressed. His manners were characterized by suavity blended with dignity, verging towards either point according to the company in which he might be placed. To ladies his politeness was marked by the most delicate manner, and his felicitous mode of paying them a compliment gained him very many admirers among the high-born beauties of Britain. In conversation with individuals of every rank and of various nations and professions, he passed with the utmost ease from one language to another, suiting his remarks to each and all in excellent taste, and commanding the astonishment and respect of his hearers.

It was in argument, however, that this exalted Brahmin was most conspicuous : he seemed to grapple with truth intuitively, and called in invective, raillery, sarcasm, and sometimes a most brilliant wit, to aid him in confuting his opponent ; if precedent were necessary, a remarkably retentive memory and extensive reading in many languages supplied him with a copious fund ; and at times with a rough, unsparing, ruthless hand he burst asunder the meshes of sophistry, error and bigotry, in which it might be attempted to entangle him.

Of Rammohun's social life in London, as of his entire European visit, very much is told in Miss Mary Carpenter's *Last Days in England of the Rajah*,\* which need not be repeated here. We catch glimpses of him at sundry sorts of society functions,

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\* Trubner & Co., 1866. While we have gladly availed ourselves of this work, our principal sources for the present chapter are found elsewhere, as the attentive reader will discern. (A revised third edition of Miss Carpenter's book entitled—*The Last Days in England of the Rajah Rammohun Roy*—was published by the Rammohun Library, Calcutta, in 1915.—Editors.)



always the centre of admiring attention, always too, the thorough Oriental gentleman, versatile, emotional, yet dignified. His gracious manners and his especial deference to women greatly ingratiated him with the fair sex, several of whom have left on record warmly appreciative reminiscences. Mrs. Le Breton ‡ who was a near neighbour of the Hares, tells of her aunt frankly confessing that “his feelings for women, still more his admiration of the mental accomplishments of English ladies, won our hearts.” Mrs. Le Breton goes on :

I often met him in London...at large parties and even balls, where he would converse on subjects that seemed rather unsuitable to the place,—the Trinity and other sacred things which were occupying his own thoughts.

The same lady has preserved an instructive incident which explains better than volumes of analysis the fatuous failure of the baser sort of Anglo-Indian :

At a party at a friend of ours—Captain Mauleverer, who had known the Rajah in India and was very much attached to him,—we...overheard one of the guests, an Indian officer of rank, say angrily “What is that *black fellow* doing here ?” A shocking speech to those who loved and honoured him so much !

Such is the folly which pride works in the less worthy members of a conquering race. Rammohun might be—and was—scholar and statesman, philanthropist and religious reformer, the

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‡ In her *Memories of Seventy Years*. (See Mrs. Anna Letitia Le Breton *Memories of Seventy Years*, Griffith and Farran ; London ; Edinburgh, 1883, pp. 171-72. The writer's aunt whom she mentions, was Miss Lucy Aikin. The reference has been kindly checked for us by Dr. A. Mitra.—Editors).

friend and superior of many a Governor and Minister ; yet to this military bully he was only 'that black fellow' ; and therefore to be chevied out of genteel society,

We nevertheless find Rammohun thoroughly at home among the young Tory bloods, not hesitating to rate them soundly as "vagabonds" and worse for impeding the progress of Reform.<sup>10</sup>

Fanny Kemble was one of the celebrities who have left on record appreciative reminiscences of their meeting with the Rajah. She was introduced to him at the house of Mr. Basil Montagu, a mutual friend. He was delighted to find her already acquainted with the Hindu drama, but was surprised to learn that she did not know *Sakuntala*, which he regarded as the most remarkable play which India had produced, and which Goethe called "the most wonderful production of human genius." The Rajah subsequently sent her a copy of Sir William Jones' translation, but she failed to find in it the beauty and sublimity he attributed to it. Rammohun was evidently profoundly susceptible to dramatic impressions, as may be seen from an entry in Mrs. Kemble's diary for December 22, 1831 :

In the evening the play was "Isabella" ; the house very bad. I played very well. The Rajah Rammohun Roy was in the Duke of Devonshire's box, and went into fits of crying, poor man !

This is a facet in a many-sided character which we are glad to have preserved. It is pleasant to

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10. Cf. Sutherland's reminiscences in the *India Gazette* February 18, 1834, reproduced in the *Calcutta Review* Vol. 57, No. 1 (October, 1935) p. 69.—Editors.



know that the great reformer was not above tears, even over a well-acted play. We owe another instructive glimpse of the man to the same keen and kindly eye. The young actress records her presence at 'a pleasant party' at the Montagus' on March 6, 1832, where for an hour she 'recovered her love of dancing,' and where she met the Rajah.

We presently began a delightful nonsense conversation, which lasted a considerable time, and amused me extremely. His appearance is very striking. His picturesque dress and colour make him, of course, a remarkable object in a London ballroom. His countenance, besides being very intellectual, has an expression of great sweetness and benignity.\*

After a threatened break "we resumed our conversation together and kept up a brief interchange of persiflage which made us both laugh very much." Three days later she notes receiving "a charming letter and some Indian books from that most amiable of all the wise men of the East."\* One smiles to imagine what the good Baptists at Serampore Mission would think now of their quondam associate and literary combatant. These visits to the playhouse in the society of one of the first peers of the realm, and these gay frivolities with an actress would doubtless only confirm their theological misgivings as to the future fate of the "intelligent heathen." Rammohun had certainly no scruples about theatre going. On June 12, 1833, we find him writing to Miss Kiddell offering to accompany that lady and her friends to Astley's in the evening.

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\* Fanny Kemble's *Record of a Girlhood*, vol. i., p. 290, and iii. 144.

Among other celebrities which Rammohun met about this time was Robert Owen, the father of British Socialism. The religious and the economic reformers were guests of Dr. Arnot, and Owen did his best to convert Rammohun to Socialism. As the Scot finally lost his temper, the Hindu was considered to have had the best of the argument.<sup>11</sup> It is interesting to remember that Mr. John Hare could call himself in a letter to Mr. Estlin (of March 25, 1834) "a poor Owenite."

The broad humanness of the Rajah's character is further shown in a little incident recorded by Miss Carpenter. The infant son of the Rev. D. Dawson was named after him 'Rammohun Roy'. The Rajah was actually present at the baptismal ceremony, and subsequently evinced a lively interest in the little fellow, calling frequently to see him. In fact, Mrs. Dawson wrote, "His visits to me were generally paid to me in my nursery, as he insisted on coming up so as to visit his namesake at the same time and not to interrupt me."<sup>12</sup> Whatever the

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11. That the conversation with Robert Owen left a deep impression on Rammohun's mind, is proved by the latter's letter to Owen's son Robert Dale Owen, dated London, April 19, 1833. This very interesting document in which Rammohun expresses his whole-hearted approval of Owen's socialistic programme, is now preserved in the New York Public Library. It also throws welcome light on the point over which Rammohun and Owen differed. For the text of the letter, see Appendix VII.—*Editors*.

12. See Mary Carpenter's *Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy* (Calcutta Ed., 1915) pp. 131-32; in this edition of the work the family name is found to be 'Davison', and not 'Dawson'.—*Editors*.



measure of perpetuity vouchsafed to the religious movement begun by Rammohun, this glimpse of the stately and courtly Brahman in the nursery, eager to see the baby and thoughtful of the mother's convenience, will, one may hope, be treasured by his followers to the very last of them as one of the sweetest and most beautiful memories of their Founder. Probably no index of character is so decisive as the attitude assumed to mother and child ; and especially of religious leaders does this rule hold. Rammohun Roy in the nursery will be remembered by Brahma mothers and Brahma children much more vividly and endearingly than in any of his appearances in Court, or Senate-house, or Church, or even in the group of loving disciples.

Amid these varied social experiences, Rammohun never seems to have forgotten the scrutiny to which his conduct would be subjected by public opinion in India. We find him on January 27, 1832, writing to a friend who had invited him to attend a Unitarian Anniversary dinner, on February 8th, in terms which reveal his constant watchfulness and sensitive regard to Indian criticism. He says :

It is truly mortifying for me to hesitate even for a moment to comply with a request of one whom I so highly esteem and respect. But I have before explained to you how much attending public dinners might be injurious to my interest in India and disagreeable to the feeling of my friends there. When you recollect, my dear Sir, that I attended the anniversary of the Unitarian Association in defiance of the positive advice of my medical attendants, who declared that my joining so large an assembly while I was troubled with inflammation would endanger my life, I feel satisfied that you will not attribute my absence to indifference about your success.

I was induced to attend Dr. Williams' anniversary dinner under an assurance from the Rev. Mr. Aspland that the party would consist of friends who felt a warm interest on my behalf. But even then I felt all the time disquiet and low spirited. However should there be any divine service before dinner at the meeting or at your Chapel. I shall be very happy to attend at the service and return home. I sincerely feel the absence of our esteemed friend Dr. Bowring.

He finally consented to join the party "after dinner at 9 o'clock.....at the London Tavern," so we learn from a note of his of February 7. This dislike of his to public dinners was evidently due to their publicity. We have already observed the readiness with which he accepted invitations to private dinner parties—at one time dining out nine successive days ; but these not being reported in the newspapers would not be so likely to reach the ears of his Hindu opponents, who were eagerly seeking occasions to prove against him breach of caste.<sup>13</sup>

But about this time Rammohun's chief pre-occupation was political rather than social or ceremonial. The agitation for Reform was sweeping on to the final crisis. The First Bill introduced by

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13. Rammohun, as we have seen, was a resolute opponent of the caste system and regarded it as one of the main causes of the disintegration of Hindu society. (Cf. above, p. 213.) In his public conduct however he carefully avoided breaches of caste-rules as far as possible because he apprehended that open and abrupt non-conformity at such an early stage might prove too great a shock for Hindu public opinion and lead to the creation of an unbridgeable gulf between himself and the rest of Hindu society. Such a state of affairs would have retarded the progress of the reform-work which he was bent upon doing.—*Editors.*



Lord John Russell as Rammohun was nearing England (March 1, 1831), and defeated in Committee in April, had been followed by an immediate Dissolution. The Second Bill was carried through the new House of Commons by September 22, but on October 8 was rejected by the Lords, and the country was brought to the verge of civil war. The Third Reform Bill was carried through all its stages in the Lower House before the end of the following March (1832); and the nation awaited the action of the Lords in a wild fever of excitement. Rammohun shared in the general agony of suspense. He felt that it was no mere British business, but that it vitally affected the fortunes of mankind, and in no place more than in India. In a letter to Miss Kiddell, of date "48 Bedford Square, March 31," he says :

I had lately the pleasure of seeing the Rev. Dr. Carpenter, and hearing from that truly venerable minister that Miss Castle and yourself were perfectly well and deeply interested in the cause of Reform, on the success of which the welfare of England, nay of the world, depends. I should have long ere this visited Bristol and done myself the honour of paying you my long promised visit, but I have been impatiently waiting in London to know the result of the Bill. I feel very much obliged by your kind offers of attention to my comforts while I am in that part of the country, of which I hope to be able to avail myself as soon as my mind is relieved on this subject.

It will be remembered that on the momentous measure being introduced in the Upper Chamber, the peers showed signs of yielding to the storm of popular agitation. The Second Reading was carried on April 14th by 9 votes. On the 27th Rammohun was sending to a lady friend in the country,—Mrs.

Woodford by name,—copies of his *Remarks on India* and a pamphlet on the abolition of Suttee ; and in the accompanying letter he referred to Lord William Bentinck's Anti-Suttee administration and then to the victory over the peers, as follows :

You will, I am sure, be highly gratified to learn that the present Governor-General of India has sufficient courage to afford them [Hindu widows] protection against their selfish relations, who cruelly used to take advantage of their tender feelings in the name and under the cloak of religion.

It must have afforded Mr. Woodford and yourself much gratification to learn by the first conveyance the division on the second reading of the Reform Bill. The struggles are not merely between the reformers and anti-reformers ; but between liberty and oppression throughout the world ; between justice and injustice, and between right and wrong. But from a reflection on the past events of history, we clearly perceive that liberal principles in politics and religion have been long gradually but steadily gaining ground, notwithstanding the opposition and obstinacy of despots and bigots. I am still unable to determine the period of my departure from London and my visit to you in the country. I may perhaps do myself that pleasure.

After the peers had shown fight for the last time, and had at last (in June) been cowed into finally passing the Bill, which was followed by similar measures for Ireland and Scotland, the Rajah wrote to Mr. William Rathbone under date of July 31st :

I am now happy to find myself fully justified in congratulating you and my other friends at Liverpool on the complete success of the Reform Bills, notwithstanding the violent opposition and want of political principle on the part of the aristocrats. The nation can no longer be a prey of the few who used to fill their purses at the expense, nay, to the ruin of the people, for a period of upwards of fifty years. The ministers



have honestly and firmly discharged their duty and provided the people with means of securing their rights. I hope and pray that the mighty people of England may now in like manner do theirs, cherishing public spirit and liberal principles, at the same time banishing bribery, corruption, and selfish interests from public proceedings.

As I publicly avowed that in the event of the Reform Bill being defeated I would renounce my connection with this country, I refrained from writing to you or any other friend in Liverpool until I knew the result. Thank Heaven, I can now feel proud of being one of your fellow subjects, and heartily rejoice that I have the infinite happiness of witnessing the salvation of the nation, nay, of the whole world.

Pray remember me kindly to Mr. Cropper and Mr. Benson and present my best respects to Mrs. Rathbone and my love to the children...

P.S.—If the German philosopher is still at Liverpool, be good enough to remember me kindly to him, and inform him that we have succeeded in the reform question without having recourse to the principles of phrenology.

One is glad to see that the Rajah did not forget the children when he wrote, and that he could not resist the chance of poking fun at the good-humoured Spurzheim. His public threat of renouncing British allegiance in case the peers triumphed might perhaps seem amusing to the lower type of Anglo-Indian mind,—the type that thought of him as only “that black fellow.” The spectacle of a solitary Hindu renouncing the British Empire and all its works because of its refusing a wider franchise, not to his Eastern countrymen, but to the people of England, might be so construed as to look positively funny. But Rammohun was conscious of being virtually Ambassador for India; and if the sympathies of the progressive Hindus whom he

typified were estranged from an unreformed England, and given, say, to a more democratic France, the Oriental memories and aspirations of the French might find less difficulty in making trouble for us in India. In any case, it was the most pronounced protest the Hindu reformer could make ; and at a time of world-crisis, as he conceived it, he must strike his heaviest stroke. It was stated, indeed, that should the Bill be defeated, he was resolved on leaving England and transferring himself and his allegiance to the United States. But we remember the intense enthusiasm he displayed for the tricolour when he first saw it at the Cape ; and a further proof of his French sympathies was supplied by his visit to Paris in the autumn of the year.<sup>14</sup>

While the people of England were thus successfully remodelling their own system of Government, the Select Committee of the House of Commons was busily employed, amid all the storm of semi-revolutionary agitation, in considering how the government of the people of India might be in its turn—though on a widely different plane,—advantageously remodelled. Rammohun, alive to the finger-tips with the significance of both phases of imperial reconstruction, was naturally most concerned with what directly affected his own countrymen. We have from his hand under date July 14th, 1832, a highly suggestive document

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14. Obviously Rammohun's great admiration for the ideals of the French Revolution was not relished by the continuator who shows himself here openly in sympathy with the Imperial interests of Britain.—*Editors.*



which appeared in the General Appendix to the Report of this Select Committee, and was so submitted to Parliament.

It consists of *Remarks on Settlement in India by Europeans*. It is a paper of rare personal and national importance. It supports the plea, which he had previously put forward both in speech and writing, for the removal of the restrictions imposed by the old Charter on the lease or purchase of lands by Europeans. He now enumerates nine advantages which he expects from the freedom asked for. European settlers would improve the agriculture and industry of the country, would help to dispel native superstitions and prejudices, would more readily secure improvements from Government, would be a check on oppression, native or British, would diffuse education through the land, would acquaint the public at home with what was going on in India as it appeared to other than official eyes, and would be an additional strength to the Government in case of invasion. The two remaining "advantages" must be quoted in full because of their daring forecast of remote possibilities :

The same cause would operate to continue the connection between Great Britain and India on a solid and permanent footing , provided only that the latter country be governed in a liberal manner, by means of Parliamentary superintendence and such other legislative checks in this country as may be devised and established. India may thus for an unlimited period enjoy union with England, and the advantage of her enlightened Government ; and in return contribute to support the greatness of this country.

If, however, events should occur to effect a separation between the two countries, then still the existence of a large

body of respectable settlers (consisting of Europeans and their descendants, professing Christianity, and speaking the English language in common with the bulk of the people, as well as possessed of superior knowledge, scientific, mechanical and political) would bring that vast Empire in the East to a level with other large Christian countries in Europe, and by means of its immense riches and extensive population, and by the help which may be reasonably expected from Europe, they (the settlers and their descendants) may succeed sooner or later in enlightening the surrounding nations of Asia.<sup>15</sup>

Certain disadvantages are then specified, with their remedies. The insolence, over-reaching, and discredit to the British name, which were feared, might be obviated by allowing to settle for the first twenty years at least, only "educated persons of character and capital," by equal laws, and by the appointment of European pleaders in country courts. Then follows a strange look ahead :

Some apprehend as the fourth possible danger, that if the population of India were raised to wealth, intelligence and public spirit by the accession and by the example of numerous respectable European settlers, the mixed community so formed would revolt (as the United States of America formerly did) against the power of Great Britain, and would ultimately establish independence. In reference to this, however, it must be observed that the Americans were driven to rebellion by misgovernment, otherwise they would not have revolted and separated themselves from England. Canada is a standing

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15. The passage indicates that Rammohun believed in the possibility of India ultimately becoming completely independent of British rule. That complete independence for his country was an ideal which was always before his mind's eye, is also known from other sources. Cf. above, pp. 268, 270-71. See also Note II at the end of the Chapter.—Editors,



proof that an anxiety to effect a separation from the Mother Country is not the natural wish of a people even tolerably well ruled. The mixed community of India in like manner, so long as they are treated liberally and governed in an enlightened manner, will feel no disposition to cut off its connection with England which may be preserved with so much mutual benefit to both countries. Yet as before observed, if events should occur to effect a separation (which may arise from many accidental causes, about which it is vain to speculate or make predictions), still a friendly and highly advantageous commercial intercourse may be kept up between two free and Christian countries, united as they will then be by resemblance of language, religion, and manners.

The fifth obstacle mentioned is the prejudicial effect of the climate on the health of Europeans. This, it is suggested, might be obviated to some extent by selecting the more salubrious spots for settlement. The paper concludes with a plea for at least a trial of the experiment.<sup>16</sup>

The prospects unfolded here in close and rapid succession are almost enough to take one's breath away. The means by which the anticipated results should be attained is a matter of minor importance. The hope of an extensive and permanent settlement of Europeans on Indian soil may have proved in the present stage of civilization utterly fallacious. The remarkable thing is the vision of the eventual condition of his country, however arrived at, as it disclosed itself to the mind of Rammohun Roy. He shows here with ample clearness the kind of India he desired, and to some extent at least

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16. For the full text of the document, see Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 238, pp. 457-60; see also above, p. 271, footnote 16. —Editors.

expected to arise. It is an *English-speaking India*. He anticipates that the settlers and their descendants will "speak the English language in common with the bulk of the people." It is, moreover,—and this is a matter of yet greater surprise—a *Christian India*. He looks to it being raised to a level with "other large Christian empires," and speaks of England and India as prospectively "two free and Christian countries, united by resemblance of religion." It is, in a word, *generally Anglicized India*, possessing the opulence, intelligence and public spirit, and also the language, religion and manners of the English race. Nor is the Rajah in the slightest degree indisposed to contemplate the prospect of India *as a nation politically independent*. In any case he evidently desires to accept as her destiny the sublime *role of the Enlightener of Asia*.

These five points constitute a singularly daring programme. Never has the spokesman of the New India been so out-spoken before. Never has he drawn so liberally on the future. Yet most of the points are in the right line of his previous development. He had been throughout a consistent advocate for Europeanizing the Hindu intellect and the Hindu civilization. His sympathy with the struggle for national independence all over the world takes from his anticipation of a free and independent India any element of surprise. His hope that India would become a light to lighten the nations of the East was a natural product of his patriotism and love of rational culture. The one puzzling thing in this forecast is the prospect of a Christianized India. The cynic may be ready with



the jibe that this part of the programme was strictly for British consumption. The Evangelical and Non-conformist public were shortly to show their strength by carrying through Parliament the abolition of West Indian Slavery ; and the lure of a converted East Indies might be supposed to secure their powerful support for Rammohun's less distant projects. This explanation, quite apart from its slur on the Rajah's character, scarcely fits the case. The reform Rammohun is asking for is by no means of the dimensions to justify so tremendous a concession ; and even if such a concession were intended, it would hardly be veiled in those indirect and allusive sentences. No one can suppose that the rest of the forecast is disingenuous. Indian independence was not exactly a prospect most agreeable to British susceptibilities ; yet it is calmly advanced as a future possibility. The other points are quite of a piece with all we have known of Rammohun Roy. The imputation of insincerity in this one point of religion is surely gratuitous. The whole forecast bears the appearance of being genuine and in good faith. But we must in fairness point out that to anticipate as possible the conversion of India to Christianity is not necessarily to regard that as the most desirable result, or to accept Christianity as one's own religion. In the struggle which must ensue between Hinduism and the Christian faith Rammohun may have foreseen that the latter would conquer as being the more fit, without himself believing it to be the most fit. It was certainly nearer his pure Theism than the agglomerate of beliefs which went under the Hindu name ; and its triumph would certainly be

more acceptable to him than its defeat. But he still may have looked beyond the victory of Christianity and hoped for the subsequent ascendancy of his own Theistic faith. Nevertheless, however we may explain his forecast, the fact remains that the Founder of the Brahmo Samaj did anticipate the eventual Christianization of India. This is a fact the significance of which ought to be at no time overlooked either by Brahmos or by Christians<sup>17</sup>.

Its importance is vastly increased when we remember that this is the last publication of Rammohun Roy. His career as author closes here ; and closes with this truly colossal outlook. The document may not unfitly be held to embody the Last Will and Testament of Rammohun Roy to the People of India. His final literary deliverance holds up to them the fivefold prospect of

India speaking English,  
India Christian.  
India socially Anglicized,  
India possibly independent,  
India the Enlightener of Asia

Among all the permutations and combinations of the Eastern and the English-speaking worlds, may these large hopes of the first Brahman who visited the English capital be reverently remembered !

Within a few months of penning this high

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17. The continuator of Miss Collet's narrative, who was a Christian missionary, has, presumably out of a natural bias, given a wishful interpretation of Rammohun's views. There is clear evidence that the latter never anticipated or desired the conversion of Indians to Christianity. See Note III at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*



tribute to the worth of English civilization, we find Rammohun Roy resident in the metropolis of our traditional rival in the East<sup>18</sup>. Of his stay in Paris we have very scanty information. Between the letter cited above and dated Bedford Square, July 31st, and a letter of Miss Aikin written in October (1832), in which she speaks of Rammohun Roy being then in Paris, we have no account of his movements. We do not know when he went or when he returned. In an *Appendice* to M. Garcin de Tassy's *Rudimens de la Langue Hindoustani*, published in 1833, there are twenty-one original Hindustani letters from various authors, one of whom is Rammohun Roy. Whether this was a fruit of his Parisian visit we have no knowledge.<sup>19</sup> The next that we do know of him is given in a letter of his written after his return to England and dated January 31st, 1833. It is addressed to Mr. Woodford and reads in full :

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18. It was regarding his visit to France that Rammohun wrote his celebrated letter to Prince Talleyrand, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, in which he suggested the formation of a World Congress of Nations in order to promote international fellowship (cf. Appendix IX). For Rammohun's relations with France, see Note IV at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors*.

19. See M. Garcin de Tassy *Appendice aux Rudimens de la Langue Hindoustani* (Paris 1833) p. 31 No. 14. The letter which is in Urdu, is dated August, 1831, and was written long before Rammohun's Paris visit, when the latter had been in England for a little more than three months. In it Rammohun expresses a desire to meet M. Chézy, the famous Oriental scholar, well-known for his edition and French translation of Kalidāsa's *Abhijñāna-śakuntalam*.—*Editors*.

My dear Sir, —I had on the 27th the pleasure of receiving your obliging communication, and beg to offer you and Mrs. W. my best thanks for this mark of attention towards me. I rejoice to observe that the translation of the Veds, &c., which I presented to Mrs. W. before my departure for the Continent of Europe, has proved interesting to her and yourself. I am now confirmed in the opinion that her good sense and her *rational* devotion to religion will not induce her to reject any reasonable sentiments on the ground that they are not found in this book, or in that volume.

I was detained in France too late to proceed to Italy last year ; besides, without a knowledge of French, I found myself totally unable to carry on communication with foreigners, with any degree of facility. Hence I thought I would not avail myself of my travels through Italy and Austria to my own satisfaction. I have been studying French with a French gentleman, who accompanied me to London, and is now living with me.

I shall be most happy to receive your nephew, Mr. Kinglake, as I doubt not his company and conversation, as your relative and a firm friend of Liberal principles will be a source of delight to me. I thank you for the mention you made of Sir Henry Strachey. His talents, acquirements and manners, have rendered his name valuable to those who know him and can appreciate his merits. To the best of my belief and recollection, I declare that I do not know a native of Persia or India who could repeat Persian with greater accuracy than this British born gentleman.

RAMMOHUN ROY

It appears that he broke his return journey at Dover, for in a letter from 48 Bedford Square of February 7, 1833, he writes to Miss Kiddell, of Bristol :

I intended to pay you both [you and Miss Castle] a visit while residing in Dover, but was informed that it was necessary to pass London on my way to Bristol. My health is, thank God, throughly re-established.



He adds that he hopes to visit Bristol within a month's time, and begs them to "present my best respect to Dr. Carpenter, who truly stands very high in my estimation."

The public ends which brought Rammohun to England were being one by one attained. For two years after his arrival he had been prosecuting his mission from the King of Delhi, and bringing the claims of his royal master before influential personages. Mr. Arnot in the *Asiatic Journal* Vol. XII, New Series, (September to December, 1833), Part I, p. 208, thus states the result :

A short time before his death he had brought his negotiations with the British Government on behalf of the King of Delhi to a successful close by a compromise with the Ministers of the Crown, which will add £30,000 a year to the stipend of the Mogul, and of course make a proportionate reduction in the Indian revenue. The deceased ambassador had a contingent interest in this large addition to the ample allowance of the Mogul pageant, and his heirs, it is said, will gain from it a perpetual income of £3,000 or £4,000 a year.

A denial of this version of the facts appeared, evidently from an official source, in the *Journal* for January, 1834.<sup>20</sup> The writer, "A.B.," did, however, allow that "Rammohun Roy delivered into the Court" of the Directors "and partially circulated a statement regarding the claims of the King"; and that he "also framed a letter in English and Persian from the King of Delhi to his late Majesty George the Fourth, corresponding in substance with the former"; but "no answer was returned to either of

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20. Cf. *Asiatic Journal* vol. XIII, New Series, (January to April, 1834), Part I pp. 55-57.—Editors.

Rajah Rammohun Roy presents his  
compliments to the Marquis of Lansdowne, and  
feels very much obliged by his Lordship's informing  
the day (Saturday next) on which the Argument on the latter  
question, is to be heard before the Privy Council

R. R. will not fail to be present there at 11 o'clock,  
to witness personally the scene in which an English Gentleman  
(or Gentlemen) of highly liberal education professing Christianity  
is to pray for the reestablishment, of suicide, and in  
many instances actual murder,

45 Bedford square  
June the 20<sup>th</sup> 1832.

IX Rammohun Roy's note to Marquis of Lansdowne, London, 20 June, 1832

British Museum, London





these representations, and no negotiation on the subject of them carried on with Rammohun Roy." The Court of Directors had indeed granted an augmentation of the King of Delhi's income, but solely on the representation of the Governor-General in Council, and would have made the addition although Rammohun Roy had never set foot in England. The writer concludes by regretting that any portion of the Directors' bounty to their royal beneficiary should have been diverted to Rammohun or his heirs. From these admissions the non-official reader will probably conclude that Rammohun's mission, however ignored officially, had really succeeded.<sup>21</sup> An impecunious monarch, is not likely to bestow a pension of three to four thousand pounds a year except in return for solid service rendered.\*

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21. The letter signed "A. B." which appeared in the *Asiatic Journal*, was a feeble and unsuccessful attempt at saving official prestige. On this point see Brajendranath Banerji *Rajah Rammohun Roy's Mission to England* (Calcutta 1926), Chapter II pp. 29-50 ; J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and the Last Moghuls* pp. lviii—lix, 230-31. In fact the measure of success attained by Rammohun's embassy seems to have roused the desire of some other contemporary Indian princes to negotiate directly with the authorities in England and we find Maharani Baija Bai of Gwalior expressing a wish, in 1833, to appoint Rammohun Roy her ambassador there (Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and the Last Moghuls* Appendix VIII pp. 337-38). Apparently Rammohun's death prevented the project from being carried through.—*Editors*.

\* In spite of these official admissions, Mr. Ananda Mohun Bose questions the truth of Arnot's statement that the Rajah and his heirs obtained the "perpetual income" named.



During this his last summer Rammohun had the satisfaction of witnessing the final blow administered to the cause of Suttee. The Appeal against the abolition of that inhuman rite was brought before the imperial authorities at home and was by them decisively rejected. Rammohun was present when the decision was announced on July 11, 1833.<sup>22</sup>

Meantime the deliberations connected with the renewal of the East India Company's Charter were proceeding towards legislation. The Report of the Special Committee had been completed and presented to Parliament in August, 1832. It was before the Court of Directors in the months of

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22. The British Museum, London, possesses an extremely interesting communication (BM 40856, f. 106) from Rammohun Roy to the Marquis of Lansdowne, dated June 20, 1832, announcing the former's firm intention to be present on the occasion of the hearing of the Appeal against the abolition of Suttee, before the Privy Council. The note which gives a forceful expression to Rammohun's righteous indignation at Englishmen supporting the cause of the anti-abolitionists runs thus :

"Rajah Rammohun Roy presents his compliments to the Marquis of Lansdowne, and feels very much obliged by his Lordship's informing him of the day (Saturday next) on which the arguments on the Suttee question is to be heard before the Privy Council.

R. R. will not fail to be present at 11 o'clock to witness personally the scene in which an English Gentleman (or Gentlemen) of highly liberal education professing Christianity is to pray for the re-establishment of suicide, and in many instances actual murder."

48 Bedford Square

June the 20th 1832

For the facsimile of the note, see Plate IX.—*Editors.*

March and April, 1833, and its recommendations agreed to. It was then drafted as a Bill and presented in the House of Commons in June. During these momentous negotiations Rammohun was doubtless very busy. In a letter to Miss Kiddell, of date May 14th, 1833, he again speaks of his intention to visit Bistol.

But (he adds) important matters passing here daily have detained me and may perhaps detain me longer than I expect. I however lose no time in informing you that the influenza has already lost its influence in London, a circumstance which justifies my entertaining a hope of seeing you and your friends in the metropolis within a short time,\* perhaps by the 25th instant.

P.S.—I sincerely hope that you *all* have escaped the complaint.

So the influenza and the puns its name suggests were a malady common in the year of the first Reformed Parliament.

On June 22 he writes to Miss Castle, who with Miss Kiddell had charge of the education of his adopted son,

I hope you will excuse my boldness when I take upon myself to remind you of your promise to read the publication of a certain learned Brahmin which I have brought to your notice.

As we have seen, Rammohun was always eager to introduce Hindu books to the knowledge of English people, and this desire was naturally greater in regard to his son's teachers. About the same time, he wrote Miss Kiddell, begging her acceptance

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\* A hope certainly fulfilled by June 12th, when, as we have seen, the Rajah wrote arranging to accompany Miss Kiddell to Astley's theatre. (See above, p. 328.—*Editors.*)



of a volume containing a series of sermons preached by Dr. Channing, which he added, "I prize very highly." The following letter to Miss Kiddell gives another glimpse of the Rajah's varied character :

48, Bedford Square,  
July 9th, 1833.

Dear Madam,—I had yesterday the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 6th and rejoice to learn that you find my son peaceable and well-behaved. I however entreat you will not stand on ceremony with him. Be pleased to correct him whenever he deserves correction. My observation on, and confidence in, your excellent mode of educating young persons, have fully encouraged me to leave my youngster under your sole guidance. I at the same time cannot help feeling uneasy now and then at the chance of his proving disrespectful or troublesome to you or to Miss Castle.

Miss Daniel is not going to Bristol to-day. She will probably leave us on Friday next, when I intend to send a parcel of books, &c., in her charge. I hope I shall be able to have the pleasure of visiting you at your country residence next week, and not before, a circumstance which I fear will prevent us from joining the meeting in your neighbourhood. Dr. Carpenter (I think) left London on Saturday last. I doubt not you will take my youngster every Sunday to hear that pious and true minister of the Gospel.

I will write again by Friday next. In the meantime I remain, dear Madam.

Yours very sincerely,  
Rammohun Roy

Private convenience was, however, still further interfered with by the slow progress of public business, as is shown by this letter to Miss Ann Kiddell :

48 Bedford Square,  
July 19th, 1833

Dear Madam,—I know not how to express the eager desire I feel to proceed to Bristol to experience your further

marks of attention and kindness, and Miss Castle's civil reception and polite conversation. But the sense of my duty to the natives of India has hitherto prevented me from fixing a day for my journey to that town, and has thus overpowered my feeling and inclination. It is generally believed that the main points respecting India will be settled by Wednesday next, and I therefore entertain a strong hope of visiting you by Friday next. I shall not fail to write to you on Wednesday or perhaps on Tuesday next. I feel gratified at the idea that you find my youngster worthy of your company. Nevertheless I entreat you will exercise your authority over him, that he may benefit himself by your instructions. If you find him refractory, pray send him back to London. If not, you may allow him to stay there till I supply his place. With my best wishes for your uninterrupted health and happiness.

I remain, dear Madam,  
Yours very sincerely,  
Rammohun Roy

P.S.—All the active members of the East India Company having been incessantly occupied by the Charter question, I have not yet brought the subject relative to your young nephew to the notice of any of them.

R. R.

The following letter to Miss Castle is on the same sheet :

Friday, dispatched on Saturday.

Ma chere Demoiselle,—Many thanks for your obliging and polite communication, which by mistake, bears no date. I am glad to observe that you are pleased with your late journey, and with your visit to Windsor. The account which Miss Kiddell and yourself have given of my son, gratifies me very much. Miss Hare received a letter from him this morning which she read to me, expressing his utmost joy and satisfaction with his present situation. I beg you will accept my best thanks for your kind treatment of him. Instead of thanking me for the little tract I had the pleasure to send you last week, I wish you had said only that you would pay attention to it.



You will perceive from my letter to Miss Kiddell that I am to be detained here a week longer at the sacrifice of my feelings. I however cannot help reflecting that to entertain a hope of enjoying the society of friends (though for a short time, say one month) is more pleasant than bringing it to a termination by the completion of it. Adieu for the present,

I remain,  
Yours very sincerely and obliged,  
Rammohun Roy

Impatience of protracted Parliamentary delay appears again in the following to Miss Ann Kiddell :

48, Bedford Square,  
July 24th, 1833.

Dear Madam,—From my anxiety to proceed to Bristol, heavy duties appeared to me light, and difficult tasks had seemed easily manageable. The consequence was that I met with disappointments from time to time, which I felt severely. To-day is the third reading of the Indian Bill in the House of Commons, after long vexatious debates in the Committee, impeding its progress under different pretensions. After the Bill has passed the Lower House, I will lose no time in ascertaining how it will stand in the Upper Branch, and will immediately leave London without waiting for the final result. I will proceed direct to Bristol next week, and on my way to [from ?] London I will endeavour to visit my acquaintances at Bath and its vicinity. I deeply regret that I should have been prevented from fulfilling my intention this week, by circumstances over which I had no control.

I feel very much obliged by your kind suggestions contained in my son's letter. You may depend on my adhering to them. I intend to leave this place a little before ten a.m., that I may arrive there on the morning of the following day. Before I leave London I hope to be able to procure the situation for

your young relative. Pray present my kindest regards to Miss Castle, and believe me, dear Madam.

Yours very sincerely,  
Rammohun Roy

Three days after this letter (July 27th) we find Rammohun writing to Miss Mary Carpenter "happy to observe from the communications of his son and his friends at Bristol that Dr. Carpenter is perfectly well, and has been discharging his duty as a faithful minister of Christ with his usual zeal and piety."

The delay attending his Bristol visit is further explained in another note to Miss Kiddell, dated 48 Bedford Square, August 16th, 1833 :

Dear Madam,—I have now the pleasure of informing you that I feel relieved, and will proceed to Stapleton Grove on Thursday next. I beg you will excuse this short letter as I am incessantly engaged in making preparations, particularly in writing letters to India and in different parts of this country. Pray give my love to my son and my kind regards to Miss Castle and believe me, dear Madam, yours very sincerely,

Rammohun Roy.

P.S.—Miss Hare presents her compliments to yourself and Miss Castle.—R. R.

At last the great measure which legalized the twenty odd years' transition of Indian government from a trading company to an Empire was finally enacted. The East India Bill received the Royal Assent on August 20. The Charter then and thus renewed, made the Company less than ever a commercial agency and more more than ever a political. It was virtually the last Charter. A precarious renewal in 1853 ended in the government



of India being taken over by the Queen in 1858. But Rammohun was not pleased with the legislative activity of the Reformed Parliament, as may be seen from this letter to Mr. Woodford.

48, Bedford Square,  
August 22nd, 1833.

My dear Sir,—I was glad to hear from Mr. Carey some time ago that you and Mrs. W. were in good health when he saw you last ; and Sir Henry Strachey, whom I had the pleasure of seeing about three weeks ago has confirmed the same information. He is indeed an extraordinary man ; and I feel delighted whenever I have an opportunity of conversing with that philosopher. I have been rather poorly for some days past ; I am now getting better, and entertain a hope of proceeding to the country in a few days, when I will endeavour to pay you a visit in Taunton. The reformed Parliament has disappointed the people of England ; the ministers may perhaps redeem their pledge during next session. The failure of several mercantile houses in Calcutta has produced much distrust both in India and England. The news from Portugal is highly gratifying, though another struggle is expected. I hope you will oblige me by presenting to Mrs. W., with my best respects, the accompanying copy of a translation, giving an account of the system of religion which prevailed in Central India at the time of the invasion of that country by Alexander the Great.

Rammohun Roy

A singular pathos attaches to this letter, which is the last we have preserved to us from Rammohun's pen<sup>23</sup>. Its wide outlook, per-

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23. This statement would have to be modified now in the light of one of Rammohun's letters, dated August 25, 1833, collected recently by Sri Dilip Kumar Biswas. See Note V at the end of the Chapter. Notice should also be taken here of two letters dated respectively the 16th and the 19th April, 1832,

sonal, political, historical, is characteristic of the man, but his disappointment with the new Parliament is more difficult to explain. The Session had given birth to Lord Ashley's first Factory Act, and decreed the abolition of West Indian slavery—no small achievements even for a reformed legislative machine. Possibly the terms of the new Charter were not to Rammohun's mind. Yet perhaps in this connection it would be well to recall what Mr. Arnot said in his obituary sketch in the *Asiatic Journal* before referred to :

Though a decided reformer, he was generally a moderate one. For his own country he did not propose even an Indian legislative council like Mr. Rickards', and he deemed the English more capable of governing his countrymen well than the natives themselves. A reference of measure of internal policy to a few of the most distinguished individuals in the European and native community, for their suggestions, previous to such measures being carried into law, was the utmost he asked in the present state of the Indian public mind. He not only always contended, at least among Europeans, for the necessity of continuing British rule for at least forty or fifty years to come, for the good of the people themselves ; but he stood up firmly against the proposals of his more radical friends, for exchanging the East India Company's rule for a Colonial form of Government.

The reasons he adduced for this position are not wanting in shrewdness. "A Colonial form of

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written by Rammohun Roy to the Right Hon'ble C. W. Wynn M. P. These have been brought to light by Mr. Sivnarayan Sen (*The Modern Review*, October, 1939, pp. 466-71). The letters, which are not mentioned either by Miss Collet or the continuator, prove that Rammohun was at this time contemplating to stand for election to the British Parliament. See Note V at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors.*



Government," be it remembered, did not then mean colonial self-government. Mr. Arnot continued :

His argument was, that in all matters connected with the colonies, he had found from long observation that the Minister was absolute, and the majority of the House of Commons subservient, there being no body of persons there who had any adequate motive to thwart the Government in regard to distant dependencies of the British Crown. The change proposed was, therefore, in his estimation, a change from a limited Government, presenting a variety of efficient checks on any abuse of its powers, for an absolute despotism.

His suggestions for the reform of Indian Government were thus of no extreme type<sup>24</sup>. Yet mild as they were, they were not embodied in the East India Bill. His elaborate recommendations submitted to the Parliamentary Committee and to the British public had not obtained legislative endorsement.

But whatever may have led to his estrangement from the Grey Ministry, which he had at first applauded with enthusiasm, it need not now specially

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24. The continuator following Arnot, is eager to prove that Rammohun's suggestions for the reform of "Indian Government were...of no extreme type". He obviously ignores the implication of Arnot's statement in the same context (although he quotes it !) that Rammohun was unwilling to grant a life-span of more than half a century to British rule in India ! It is not unoften that we can trace marks of a positive distaste in contemporary English circles, not excluding his friends and admirer's, towards Rammohun's love of independence and radical social sympathies. There are possible indications, though paucity of sources would not permit us to be sure,—that Rammohun's political and social outlook was growing increasingly radical during his last days. See Note VI at the end of the Chapter,—*Editors*.

concern us. For Rammohun's political career was over. The series of brilliant services which mark him out as the pioneer of Indian freedom may be said to have ended when King William gave his assent to the East India Bill. The less than forty days which remained to Rammohun Roy after that event were spent outside of the arena of public questions.

About the closing weeks of his life there gathered many shadows. His was a sunset not of flaming sky and gorgeous cloud-wreath, but of struggling beams and weeping mist. Sandford Arnot insisted that "during the last period of his life his manners were much changed and the powers of his mind seemed to be decaying." This was stoutly denied by his staunch Unitarian friends, and may have been due only to Arnot's disappointed rapacity. The bluntest statement of the Rajah's difficulties is given in a private letter from the Sanskrit scholar Horace Hayman Wilson, to Babu Ram Comul Sen, written 21st December, 1833—three months after Rammohun's death—but published in the *Indian Mirror*, July 15, 1872.<sup>25</sup>

Rammohun had grown very stout, and looked full and flushed when I saw him. It appears also that mental anxiety contributed to aggravate his complaint. He had become embarrassed for money, and was obliged to borrow of his friends here ; in doing which he must have been exposed to much annoyance, as people in England would as soon part with their lives as their money. Then Mr. Sandford Arnot, whom he had employed as his secretary, importuned him for the payment of large sums which he called arrears of salary,

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25. The text of the letter will also be found in Peary Chand Mitra's *Life of Diwan Ramcomul Sen* (Calcutta 1880) pp. 14-15.—Editors.



and threatened Rammohun, if not paid, to do what he has done since his death—claim as his own writing all that Rammohun published in England. In short Rammohun had got amongst a low, needy, unprincipled set of people, and found out his mistake, I suspect, when too late, which preyed upon his spirits and injured his health.

As this letter was written after conversation with Mr. Hare's brother, it may be taken for trustworthy testimony. Pecuniary embarrassment was a misfortune from which Rammohun had never suffered before. His sons in India, according to the letter of Babu Nagendranath Chatterjee of January 2, 1883, reporting the testimony of Babu Nanda Kishore Bose, "neglected to send him money latterly,"—a neglect which seems the less excusable in the light of the large pension he had secured for the family from the King of Delhi. His wealth, actual or prospective, being in India, he could not realize it in England. Babu N. Bose declares (in letter cited above) that owing to the lack of remittances from India, Rammohun, who had previously "refrained from dining with Englishmen," "was compelled from sheer necessity to dine with the Carpenters." The revolt of his parasites, however, only throws into clearer contrast the firm loyalty of his Unitarian friends. He had been living for some time now at the house of Mr. Hare, and the daughter of Mr. David Hare—his educational ally in Calcutta—was his devoted attendant to the end<sup>26</sup>.

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26. The continuator relying on the erroneous information of Miss Mary Carpenter (*Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta 1915, p. 146) calls her the daughter of David Hare. She was actually the sister of David Hare. The latter was a bachelor.—*Editors*.

The looked-for journey to Bristol was taken at last. Early in September the Rajah arrived at Stapleton Grove on the outskirts of that city, the hospitable home of Miss Kiddel and Miss Castle where his adopted son was being educated. With Rammohun came his two Hindu servants Ramhari Das and Ramratan Mukerjee, neither of whom proved models of domestic loyalty,—and the ever faithful Miss Hare. Dr. Carpenter was in Bristol at the time, and Mr. Estlin was Rammohun's medical adviser and friend.

Doubtless the Rajah, however worried by the claims of the extortionate Arnot, and however anxious about his future, would feel Stapleton Grove to be something like a haven of rest. He was among cultured religious people whose fidelity was beyond question. He was entertained and accompanied by admiring and sympathetic women. And his adopted boy was with him. It is pleasant to reflect on this little lull, of less than a fortnight, between a career full of conflict and what Browning calls "the last fight and the best."

One menace to the tranquility of his stay at the Grove was perhaps offered by the religious eagerness of the hospitable circle in which he moved. On the two Sundays he was able to do so, he worshipped with his friends at Lewin's Mead Chapel; and they showed no slight desire to secure from him a confession of Christian faith. Mr Estlin recorded in his diary for September 9 that Rammohun had in his hearing declared "he denied the Divinity of Christ" but "distinctly asserted his belief



in the Divine mission of Christ.”<sup>27</sup> Rev. John Foster\* bore witness to the fact that on the 11th of September the Rajah “avowed unequivocally his belief in the resurrection of Christ and in the Christian miracles generally. At the same time he said that the internal evidence of Christianity had been the the most decisive of his conviction.” Mr. Estlin’s diary for the 11th attests that the Rajah gave an account of the process which he went through in arriving at his present religious conclusions : “his belief in the resurrection of Christ, as the foundation of his faith in the general resurrection, he firmly declared.”

The Rev. William Jay of Bath, confesses to receiving a similar impression. He preached on June 17th, 1832, in Rowland Hill’s chapel, a sermon on “The Riches of His Goodness,” and among his hearers were the Lord Mayor of London and the Rajah. Mr. Jay says in his advertisement dated 1843†.

“When the service was over the Rajah came into the chapel house and pressed for leave, at his own expense, to print the sermon for distribution among his friends.” . . . “The author, with regard to this very extraordinary man, cannot help remarking that not only from the circumstance of his espousing this sermon (which, though not highly doctrinal, has allusions and intimations which would not accord with some

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27. See Mary Carpenter *The Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta Ed. 1915, pp. 158-59.—Editors.

\* Quoted in ‘*The Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy* by Mary Carpenter (Calcutta Ed. 1915, pp. 153-54).

† Works of William Jay, Vol. vii., (London, 1843). p. 100.

theology), but from subsequent intercourse, as also from the testimony of others, he is persuaded that though at his first embracing Christianity he was Unitarian in his views, he was after he came to this country a sincere and earnest enquirer after evangelical truth, and would have professed his adoption of it had he not been prematurely removed by death.\*

In this connection we may mention another witness. The Rev. Richard Warner, Rector of Great Chalfield, Wilts., published in 1832 a sermon on "Charity, the Greatest of the Christian Graces," with a Dedication to Rammohun Roy†, in which the Rajah is extolled "for the labours in which he exercises himself for the diffusion of the Light of Christianity and the promotion of Evangelical Love among an hundred millions of his countrymen." The worthy Rector proceeds :

Rajah, never shall I forget the long and profoundly interesting conversation which passed between us a few days ago. . . . Nor will the noble declaration fade from my recollection, that you were not only ready to sacrifice station, property and even life itself to the advancement of a religion which (in its genuine purity and simplicity) proved its descent from the God of Love, . . . but that you should consider the abstaining from such a course as the non-performance of one of the Highest Duties imposed upon rational, social, and

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\* A glimpse of the heart of the man is given in an incident mentioned by Mr. Jay. The worthy divine had told the old story : "When Dr. Doddridge asked his little daughter, who died so early, why everybody seemed to love her, she answered, "I cannot tell, unless it be because I love everybody." He adds in a footnote : "Around this anecdote the Rajah, in the copy he sent the preacher, had drawn a pencil line."

† Quoted in pp. 22 and 23 of "A learned Indian in search of a Religion," by William Hamilton Drummond, D.D., London, 1833.



accountable man ! . . . May God prosper your benevolent endeavours to spread.....the knowledge of Christ and the practice of Christian Charity !

This enthusiastic clergyman signs himself "Your friend and brother in Christ."<sup>28</sup>

The diary of Mr. Estlin, published in Miss Mary Carpenter's work cited above, furnishes the fullest account of the last days of Rammohun Roy.<sup>29</sup> On Thursday, the 19th, he found the Rajah ill in fever. From Mr. H. H. Wilson we learn that "it was thought he had the liver complaint, and his medical treatment was for that, not for determination to the head."<sup>30</sup> But it was, after all, the overworked brain that was giving out. Mr. Estlin (on the 19th) noted the headache which accompanied the fever, and that he slept with his eyes much open. He needed a nurse. The medical man suggested that Miss Hare be allowed to attend to him. The sick Hindu objected on score of propriety. Mr. Eastlin reassured him as to

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28. This is not the first occasion in Rammohun's career when high-strung Christian enthusiasm sought to construe his great and unconcealed respect for Christianity, as a sign of his formal adoption of the dogmas of that religion. We shall not however be justified in drawing any conclusion regarding Rammohun's religious views from the testimony of persons undoubtedly sincere but *over-eager* to extort from him "a confession of Christian faith." See Note VII at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors*.

29. See Mary Carpenter *The Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy* (Calcutta Ed. 1915), pp. 158-70.—*Editors*.

30. Cf. the afore-mentioned letter to Diwan Ramcomal Sen *vide* Pearychand Mitra's *Life of Diwan Ramcomul Sen*, Calcutta 1880, p. 14.—*Editors*.



X Raja Rammohun Roy

From portrait in *The Precepts of Jesus*, London, 1834

Lent by Sri Devaprasad Mitra





British notions on that head, and David Hare's daughter<sup>31</sup> was forthwith installed as nurse to her father's friend and her own. Mr. Estlin on the 22nd remarked on Miss Hare's weariless watchfulness and great influence with the Rajah : "He is evidently much attached to her, and her regard for him is quite filial,"—a pleasing fact to remember of the lone Hindu's last days. Next day (the 23rd) "the head appearing the organ most affected, leeches were applied." But the illness moved on towards its fatal issue.

The Rajah seemed to pass much of his waking time in prayer. What special burdens weighed on his mind and pressed out his entreaties, we have no means of knowing. His utterance of the sacred "AUM"—one of the last words he was heard to utter—suggested that at the solitary gate of death as well as in the crowded thoroughfare of life the contemplation of Deity was the chief pre-occupation of his soul<sup>32</sup>. Soon he began to lose all power

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31. Sister.—*Editors*.

32. It shows clearly that at the moment of his death Rammohun meditated upon the *praṇava* mantra in the traditional manner of an Indian *Vedāntin* (Cf. above, p. 191, footnote 20). It is significant that he did not utter any Christian prayer or confession at this time. It is perhaps a conclusive proof that the over-credulous Christian friends were wrong in their impression that Rammohun was heading towards a full-fledged acceptance of the Christian faith during his last few days. In spite of his great admiration for the personality of Christ and the moral teachings of Christianity he remained to the last moment loyal to the ideals of his of Universal Theism and if we may judge from the utterance of the *praṇava* at the moment of death, the *Vedānta* was nearest to his heart at this time.—*Editors*.



of consciousness and speech, and yet he occasionally recovered sufficiently to express his deep thankfulness to the kind friends about him.

On Friday, the 27th September the final crisis came. Mr. Estlin thus describes it—

The Rajah became worse every few minutes, his breathing more rattling and impeded, his pulse imperceptible. He moved about his right arm constantly and his left arm a little a few hours before his death. It was a beautiful moonlight night ; on one side of the window, as Mr. Hare, Miss Kiddell and I looked out of it, was the calm rural midnight scene ; on the other, this extraordinary man dying. I shall never forget the moment. Miss Hare, now hopeless and overcome, could not summon courage to hang over the dying Rajah as she did while soothing or feeding him ere hope had left her, and remained sobbing in the chair near ; the young Rajah<sup>33</sup> was generally holding his hand. . . . At half-past two Mr. Hare came into my room and told me it was all over. His last breath was drawn at 2.25.

So passed the soul of the great Hindu. His was a life of transition, from the time when he broke with his boyish faith and his father's house, all through the stormy years of his manhood ; and now the greatest transition of all had come. The restless and valiant seeker after truth had at last arrived and attained. The pathos and poetry of that death-scene will linger long in the wistful imagination of India. The strange and distant western region, the rich rural landscape sleeping under the glamour of an autumn moon, the solitary country house standing out distinct in the silvery mystery of the moonlight, everything wrapped in tranquillity and hushed to perfect stillness, Nature

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33. Rammohun's foster-son, Rajaram.—*Editors.*

and Night combining to suggest the presence of the Eternal Calm ; and within, the spirit of the great emancipator struggling to burst the fetters of mortality, and at last achieving the freedom and peace of the mystery which he had given his life to apprehend,—here is a weirdly-mingled memory for the spiritual descendants of Rammohun, the myriad millions yet to be of an enlightened and enfranchised East.

On the day after death the body was subjected to a medical examination by Mr. Estlin, assisted by several friends. The cause of death was found to be “fever producing great prostration of the vital powers, and accompanied by inflammation of the brain.” The fact the brain was inflamed, of which the usual symptoms had not appeared, was ascertained only by this *post mortem* inspection. Brain fever, brought on by financial and other worry, following on a life of intense mental activity, was thus the natural termination of the Rajah’s career.

Mr. Estlin’s diary records of the deceased that “his Brahminical thread was over the left shoulder and under the right, like a skein of common brown thread.” The same evening the body was placed in the shell and leaden coffin under the superintendence of Mr. Estlin, who took care that the “Brahminical thread was never removed.” One of Rammohun’s servants, Ramratan was compelled—“much against his will”—to attend as witness of these facts.

The interment of the great Brahman was characteristic of his career. In a postscript which



is attached to Dr. Lant Carpenter's funeral Review, (London and Bristol, 1833) we have at once the narrative and explanation of Rammohun's singular obsequies :

The knowledge that the Rajah had in various ways manifested solicitude to preserve his caste with a view both to his usefulness and to the security of his property, and the belief that it might be endangered if he were buried among other dead or with Christian rites, operated to prevent the interment of his remains in any of the usual cemeteries. Besides this the Rajah had repeatedly expressed the wish that in case of his dying in England, a small piece of freehold ground might be purchased for his burying place, and a cottage be built on it for the gratuitous residence of some respectable poor person, to take charge of it. Every difficulty, however, was removed by the offer of Miss Castle, in which she had the warm accordance of all her intimate friends, to appropriate to the object a beautifully adapted spot in a shrubbery near her lawn, and under some fine elms. There this revered and beloved person was interred, on the 18th of October,\* about 2 p.m. The coffin was borne on men's shoulders, without a pall, and deposited in the grave, without any ritual and in silence. Everything conspired to give an impressive and affecting solemnity to his obsequies. Those who followed him to the grave and sorrowed there were his son and his two native servants, the members of the families of Stapleton Grove and Bedford Square, the Gurdians of Miss Castle and two of her nearest relatives, Mr. Estlin, Mr. Foster, and Dr. Jerrard, together with several ladies connected with the attendants already enumerated ; and as there could be no regular entry of the interment in any official registers, those who witnessed it have signed several copies of a record drawn up for the

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\* In Rev. J. Scott Porter's funeral sermon, the *Bristol Gazette* is credited with the statement :—"He was interred on Tuesday, 15th October." Dr. Carpenter's date above is less likely to be in error.

purpose, in case such a document should be needed for any legal purposes.<sup>34</sup>

So he was buried. Alone in his death as in his life, in alien soil, but carefully protected to the last from violation of his native customs. The silence that fell at the grave which closed so active and vocal a life is strangely suggestive. Rammohun's last word remains unspoken.

The grave in which he was laid was not, however, to be the final resting place. Ten years later a new home was found for his earthly remains in the cemetery of Arno's Vale near Bristol. There the Rajah's great friend and comrade, Dwarakanath Tagore, who had come over from India on pious pilgrimage to the place where the Master died, erected a tomb of stone. It was in 1872—nearly forty years after Rammohun had passed out of the region of sensuous existence—that this inscription was added :

BENEATH THIS STONE REST THE REMAINS OF

RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY BAHADOOR.

A CONSCIENTIOUS AND STEADFAST BELIEVER IN THE UNITY  
OF THE GODHEAD ;

HE CONSECRATED HIS LIFE WITH ENTIRE DEVOTION TO THE  
WORSHIP OF THE DIVINE SPIRIT ALONE.

TO GREAT NATURAL TALENTS HE UNITED A THOROUGH  
MASTERY OF MANY LANGUAGES,

AND EARLY DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF AS ONE OF THE  
GREATEST SCHOLARS OF HIS DAY.

HIS UNWEARIED LABOURS TO PROMOTE THE SOCIAL,  
MORAL AND PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE OF INDIA,  
HIS EARNEST ENDEAVOURS TO SUPPRESS IDOLATRY AND THE  
RITE OF SUTTEE, AND HIS CONSTANT ZEALOUS ADVOCACY  
OF WHATEVER TENDED TO ADVANCE THE GLORY OF GOD

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34. See Plate XI—*Editors*.



AND THE WELFARE OF MAN, LIVE IN THE GRATEFUL  
REMEMBRANCE OF HIS COUNTRYMEN.

THIS TABLET

RECORDS THE SORROW AND PRIDE WITH WHICH HIS MEMORY  
IS CHERISHED BY HIS DESCENDANTS.

HE WAS BORN IN RADHANAGORE, IN BENGAL, IN 1774,<sup>35</sup>  
AND DIED AT BRISTOL, SEPTEMBER 27TH, 1833.

Another monument, on less durable material, belongs to Bristol. In the vestibule of the Museum hangs a full length portrait of Rammohun, which was painted by Mr. H. P. Briggs, R.A.<sup>36</sup>

As was to be expected, the demise of the Hindu Theist led to the delivery of many eloquent and impressive funeral discourses. Among these may be mentioned Dr. Lant Carpenter's at Bristol, and Rev. W. J. Fox's at Finsbury Chapel, London, both of which contain much valuable biographic material.<sup>37</sup> They display an easily explicable desire

35. For the controversy regarding the year of Rammohun's birth see above, p. 1n.—*Editors*.

36. Reproduced as *frontispiece* in the present volume.—*Editors*.

37. There were notices of the mournful event of Rammohun's death in many pulpits, in England and Ireland. Dr. Kenny, of St. Olav's Southwark, preached a sermon at the request of his parishoners. Five sermons were printed viz. those by Dr. L. Carpenter preached in Lewin's Mead Chapel, Bristol (delivered on October 6, 1833), by Rev. Aspland in the New Gravel Pit Meeting, Hackney (delivered on the same date), by Dr. W. H. Drummond in the Presbyterian Church of Strand Street, Dublin (delivered on October 27, 1833), by Rev. J. Scott Porter in the Meeting House of the first Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast (delivered on November 10, 1833), and by Rev. W. J. Fox in the Finsbury Chapel London, (published from London in 1833) (Mary Carpenter *The Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta, 1915, pp. 209-16).—*Editors*.

to identify the late Brahman with Christianity, but bear also striking witness to the power the Rajah had shown of inspiring warm personal affection. It is the ardent and admiring friend, not the spiritual undertaker, which appears in the preacher. That Rammohun should have rivetted to himself Hindu souls, of the same clime and blood as he was, and groping as he had groped after the light behind the cloud of ancient Indian religion, was not to be wondered at so much as the devoted friendships which he created among foreigners, of alien ways of thinking and believing, whom he had known only for a comparatively short period. It is no small testimony to his character that even a slight acquaintance with him was enough to stir stolid and phlegmatic Englishmen to something very nearly a passion of love for him. There must have been much love in the man to evoke such devotion.

A jarring note in the general chorus of eulogy was struck by the biographic writings of Mr. Sandford Arnot, who had been Secretary to the Rajah from his arrival in England until a few months prior to his death. This man contributed a sketch of his deceased master to the November number of the *Asiatic Journal* (1833), in which besides speaking somewhat harshly of the change that came over the mind and manners of the Rajah in the last months of his life, he suggested that the Rajah's literary work in English owed more than was generally supposed to his secretary's assistance. Dr. Lant Carpenter replied with some severity to this charge, in his published memorials of the great



Hindu, as did also Mr. John Hare in the *Times* and other public prints. Arnot made rejoinder in the January number of the *Asiatic Journal*, specifying his services to the Rajah and remarking, "I did no more than I suppose every other secretary does, that is, ascertains from his principal what he wishes to say or prove on any given subject, receives a rough outline, and works it out in his own way, making as many points and giving as much force of diction as he can."<sup>38</sup> We may readily admit that Rammohun made free use of secretarial help, without impairing to any extent worth considering the genuineness of his authorship, or the reality of his singular command of the English language. Sub-editors and secretaries may render most valuable aid, but their minor labours may never be mistaken for the work of the Chief. If he be a foreigner, it is their duty to preserve his English from lapses into foreign idiom and to suggest idiomatic utterances in their native tongue in place of his more colourless expressions. But editing is not composing. This Arnot as a journalist very well knew, and his effort to magnify his secretarial functions at the expense of his patron's literary reputation ought never to have been made. The pecuniary claims with which it was preceded and accompanied betray the extortionate purpose of the whole miserable business.

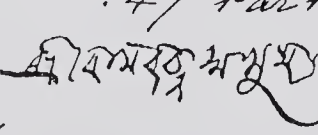
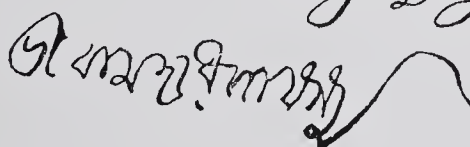
A controversy of a nobler kind arose concerning the religious position which the Rajah finally adopted. There was a very natural desire

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38. For a detailed history of controversy see Note VIII at the end of the Chapter.—*Editors*.

We the undersigned were present at the interment of the late Rajah Rammohun Roy, on Friday the 18th day of October, 1833, in a spot under several Elms, adjoining the Lawn at Stapleton Grove, the residence of Miss Castle and of her Maternal Aunt and Guardian Miss Kiddell. The interment took place in silence and without any ceremony.

Ann Kiddell Stapleton Grove  
Catherine Castle Stapleton Grove  
John Hare, 48 Bedford Square London  
Joseph Hare, 48 Bedford Square London  
Janet Hare 48 Bedford Square  
Rajah Ramm Roy: 48 Bedford-Square London  
John Bishop Estlin, Surgeon, Bristol.  
Geo. E. Sanders. - Clifton - One of the Guardians - of Miss Castle.  
Lamb Carpenter Th.D. Protestant Dissenting Minister, Bristol - One of the Guardians of Miss Castle.

Frisanna Estlin Bristol.  
Joseph Henry Jeward D.C.L. Principal of the Bristol College & Fellow of Queens College Cambridge.  
Mary Carpenter 2 Great George St Bristol.  
Elizabeth Dawson Stapleton Grove  
Mary Anne Estlin. 47 Park Street.  
Rammotun Mukerjee  - Bristol.  
Rammhurry Daff  


Mr Harris. Mr H Castle, Rev J Foster, Miss Foster, Mrs B Smith, & Mr Kiddell were also present, but their signatures were not affixed.





on the part of his Christian friends to claim him as in the end a decided Christian. Reverends W. Jay and Richard Warner did, we have seen, declare him a signal convert to Evangelical religion. In a conversation on the Lord's Prayer with the father of Mr. G. N. Aitchison (as reported in a letter from the latter to Prof. Max Muller, of date September 27, 1883) Rammohun is stated to have declared his conviction that "that prayer was never made by *man* : its author could have been nothing less than Divine'. Rev. John Foster held him to have made virtual confession, a few days before he died, of the Divine authority of Christ. Mr. Estlin, as already recorded, reported more precisely Rammohun's disbelief in the Divinity, but acceptance of the Divine mission of Jesus. Both these friends of his assert the Rajah's unequivocal conviction of the Resurrection of Jesus. We cannot wonder at Unitarian Christians regarding him as an illustrious champion of their views. But we may not accept offhand the testimony of these eager witnesses. Their differing estimates of his faith had been anticipated by him. Babu N. Bose used to tell how "Rammohun Roy before leaving for England, told him that the followers of every prevailing religion would reckon him, after his death, as one of their co-religionists. The Moham-medans would call him a Mohammedan, the Hindus would call him a Vedantic Hindu, the Christians a Unitarian Christian."<sup>39</sup> But Babu N. Bose

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39. See Nagendranath Chatterjee *Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rāyer Jiban Charit* (5th Edition) pp. 613-14. The piece of information, coming from Sj. Nandakishore Bose,



added, "he really belonged to no sect. His religion was Universal Theism." As he believed this principle to be the quintessence of every religion, he was able to approach the advocates of the most different creeds with a sympathy and an emphasis on points of agreement which they could only interpret as complete adhesion. The impression thus made was deepened by his extreme Oriental courtesy which seemed to not unfriendly Westerns to pass into over-great complaisance. Mr. James Sutherland, who was warmly attached to the Rajah, could write (in the *India Gazette*, February 18, 1834)<sup>40</sup> :

On questions of religious faith Rammohun Roy was in general too pliant, perhaps from his excessive fear of giving offence, or wounding the feelings of anybody, which accounts for the controversy which has arisen about his religious opinions. In fact, no matter what the creed of the parties with whom he conversed on such a subject, he was sure to impress them with an idea, either that he was of their peculiar faith, or that they had converted him to it. A lady once observed to me that she was rejoiced to find that he was a sincere Trinitarian, and that he had merely gone to Unitarian places of worship from curiosity, as he had attended Quakers' meetings, the Jewish Synagogue, etc.

Full weight must be given to these considerations. But they are not sufficient to account for the impression that the mind of the Rajah

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father of Rajnarayan Bose and a direct disciple of Rammohun, can be considered reliable. Nagendranath Chatterjee's book contains the best treatment of Rammohun's religious position. Cf. Chapters XVI, XVII and XVIII, pp. 526-650.—Editors.

40. Reprinted in the *Calcutta Review* Vol. 57, No. 1, p. 66.—Editors.

was in his later days moving towards more positive religious convictions. Sandford Arnot, whose testimony is not without value after allowance has been made for his one distorting motive, roundly asserts that "in regard to religious belief" he saw "no reason to think that the slightest change took place in the Rajah's mind for the last forty or fifty years, that is, since the period when about sixteen years of age he began to doubt Hinduism." But this statement is no sooner made than Arnot—apparently quite unconsciously—goes on to show how the Rajah's mind was actually changing. Arnot's scornful disbelief in Ram-mohun's reputed movement towards Christianity makes the following remarks of his all the more striking evidence :

As he advanced in age, he became more strongly impressed with the importance of religion to the welfare of society, and the pernicious effects of scepticism. In his younger years, his mind had been deeply struck with the evils of believing too much, and against that he directed all his energies ; but in his later days he began to feel that there was as much, if not greater, danger in the tendency to believe too little.

Friends and believers in the New India growing up under British rule will warmly sympathise with the observations which next follow :

He often deplored the existence of a party which had sprung up in Calcutta, composed principally of imprudent young men, some of them possessing talent, who had avowed themselves sceptics in the widest sense of the term. He described it as partly composed of East Indians, partly of the Hindu youth, who, from education had learnt to reject their own faith without substituting any other. These he thought more debased than the most bigoted Hindu, and their principles the bane of all morality.



His sense of this, the gravest danger of the Indian people, was only deepened by his experiences in the West :

His strong aversion to infidelity was by no means diminished during his visit to England and France ; on the contrary the more he mingled with society in Europe the more strongly he became persuaded that religious belief is the only sure groundwork of virtue. "If I were to settle with my family in Europe," he used to say, "I would never introduce them to any but religious persons, and from amongst them only would I select my friends ; amongst them I find such kindness and friendship that I feel as if surrounded by my own kindred."

Next comes still more impressive evidence—from such a witness—as to the Rajah's changed mental attitude :

He evidently now began to suspect that the Unitarian form of Christianity was too much rationalized (or sophisticated, perhaps, I may say) to be suitable to human nature. He remarked in the Unitarians a want of that fervour of zeal and devotion found among other sects, and felt doubts whether a system appealing to reason only was calculated to produce a permanent influence on mankind.

Revulsion from the rationalism of Unitarians is a very decided portent of religious evolution. A kindred reaction affected him in regard to the philosophy then prevalent in England. Arnot continues :

He perceived the same defect in the Utilitarian philosophy, and ridiculed the notion that man, a being governed by three powers,—reason, imagination and the passions,—could be directed by those who addressed themselves only or chiefly to the first of these powers, overlooking the importance of the two other elements of human nature, which must continue to exert an everlasting influence.

There is much to confirm, there is nothing to impugn, these statements of Arnot.<sup>41</sup> They bear every mark of being thoroughly veracious and are made still less open to question by Arnot's own contemptuous disbelief in Rammohun's supposed Christianity. They present additional indications of a kind which have been numerous throughout Rammohun's whole career, and which have grown more numerous towards its close. We have seen him lean increasingly towards fellowship with Anglicans, claiming an Anglican clergyman as his "parish priest." We have observed his remarkable anticipation that India would eventually become

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41. These extracts from Arnot's writings are quoted from an article published in the *Asiatic Journal* Vol. xii, New Series, (September to December, 1833) pp. 195-213. It should be noted that Arnot made quite positive statements regarding Rammohun's religious faith on two different occasions. In a letter to the *Times*, London, Saturday, November 23, 1833, p. 3, he says :

".....permit me to state, in justice to his friends in India, that his creed did not correspond with that of any sect of Christians I am aware of, except in one point,—the strict unity of the Deity, which he held in common with many other enlightened men of all religions, from the followers of Moses and Menu, to those of Mahomet. I can state this without hesitation, from years of unreserved communication with him both here and abroad." Again in course of a rejoinder in the *Asiatic Journal* Vol. xii, New Series (September to December 1833) p. 290, he almost repeats the same conclusion emphatically : "All I shall say is, that his piety was, I believe, sincere, and his religious principles, I think, highly philosophical and benevolent, though not at all corresponding with those of any sect of Christians except in doctrine of the Unity of God." We are indebted for the text of the letter published in the *Times* to S. J. Amitabha Gupta and Dr. A. Mitra.—Editors.



Christian.<sup>42</sup> We may discount, but cannot wholly disallow, the witness of John Foster and J. B. Estlin concerning Rammohun's faith in the Resurrection.

To what do these things point? To Rammohun having gradually glided into Unitarian or even Evangelical Christianity? By no means. Rammohun was no Evangelical Christian, like Mr. Kenney or Mr. Jay. He was no Christian even of the type of Dr. Carpenter.\* The conscious and complete surrender of the will to the authority of Jesus which is involved in conversion to either of these forms of Christian life is an experience through which according to the evidence before us, Rammohun never passed. With the awful demand, "If any man would come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me," we have no adequate ground for supposing that Rammohun complied. But a dispassionate view of the marvellous history of the man discredits the fancy that his convictions showed no change throughout his career of reform, even more utterly than it discredits the idea that he was a Christian. It points conclusively to the fact that Rammohun's awakened life was one of continuous transition. From the time when he left his father's house in revolt against conventional Hinduism to the last days in Stapleton Grove, his mind was moving on.

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42. See Note III to this Chapter.—*Editors.*

\* Such was the deliberate conviction of the authoress of this Life. She stated her decision to the continuator that "Rammohun was not a Christian. He did not believe in Christ as we believe in Him."

It was driven forward by the imperious personal problem : Given an intensely religious nature, with profound emotions, large imagination and fine ethical sense, how to find expression for the same consonantly with the claims of a keen and comprehensive intellect.

The solution involved in the first instance a resolute break with the traditional polytheism. The process was to begin with chiefly negative. The youthful Reformer was for showing up the mistakes of all the religions.<sup>43</sup> To gain the freedom demanded by his religious impulses, he was glad to welcome the destructive aid of rationalism. But rationalism was to him ever a means, never an end. His end was persistently religious, and therefore eventually positive. So he soon passed from an attitude towards all religions that was critical if not hostile, to an attitude that was sympathetic. He would extract the rational elements out of Hinduism and appropriate the ethical contents of Christianity. He tried to find a common denominator for Hindu and Christian Unitarianism.<sup>44</sup> The device might please his intellect but European Unitarianism left little room for the development of his warm-blooded Oriental passion for religion. The founding of the Brahmo Samaj showed an effort not

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43. The reference here is obviously to Rammohun's views as expressed in his earliest extant work *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin*. See above, pp. 17-20.—Editors.

44. To the list one must necessarily add Islamic monotheism as well as Buddhist social teachings, both of which played significant roles in shaping Rammohun's thought (Cf. above, pp. 17-23, 213-214, 238-39).—Editors.



merely to satisfy the large ambitions of a devout and comprehensive intellect, but to meet the more specifically religious needs of a genuine fellowship and of a social "morality touched with emotion". Intellectualism was still in the ascendent, but the driving power was religion. With his arrival in England the process of evolution was naturally vastly accelerated. His knowledge of religious and philosophic systems was fertilized by close contact with the life out of which they grew or with which they were supposed to correspond. In especial, he came to know Christianity, not through its books or through isolated persons or groups as in India, but in its collective life and in its domestic civilization. He came to adopt a more positive and concrete and perhaps a less merely speculative view of religion.

For the negative and disintegrating influence of the analytic intellect he developed an increasing horror. He denounced its effects in the scepticism of Calcutta and still more of Paris.<sup>45</sup> He felt the barrenness and impotence of the Unitarian philosophy. Man was much more than an intellectual machine. He had an imagination and a heart, and unless these were stirred creed or calculus or code were of slight avail. The need of religion, as distinguished from plausible

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45. There is absolutely no evidence to prove that Rammohun had any special aversion to France on the ground of French "scepticism". Arnot's remarks on which the continuator bases his own, are, as can be plainly seen, equally applicable to England. It is therefore difficult to appreciate the dig, "still more of Paris" !—*Editors.*





XII Rammohun's tomb at Arno's Vale, Bristol

From a photograph lent by Sri Nisikanta Sen





speculations, became ever more paramount in Rammohun's eyes. Religion kindled imagination, roused passion, set the conscience in motion, as well as appeased the reason. But judged by these standards, Unitarian Christianity with which he had once hoped to effect much, was seriously lacking. It was too exclusively intellectual. In the other Christian sects there might be less of reason and reasoning, but there was manifestly more of religion. Rammohun was coming to recognise more and more that religion was a whole-human thing : it was a force : it was a vital soul-kindling soul-begetting power : it was infinitely more than any causal theory of the Universe : it was never to be confounded with an arid rationalism or a bloodless ethicism. The primal religious impulse of Rammohun's nature was at last disentangling itself from the intellectualism under which it had long been working, at first joyously, but latterly with painful sense of oppression.

It will not do, therefore, to dub Rammohun Roy, "Universal Theist" with Babu N. Bose, and pass on as though that formula could express his ever changing career. At the outset his Theism was intellectually not far from the Deism of last century, in the end it was religiously not far from the spirit of Christianity. In the earlier stages of his emancipation, his faith seemed to differ little from the fictitious "natural religion" of the eighteenth century philosophers save for a strong infusion of Oriental passion. Towards the close, we see him turning with weary disgust from the fanciful abstractions of the speculative intellect to



the dynamic facts of human nature and of human history. How much further he would have moved in the direction of positive religion if his life had been prolonged for any considerable period, it is idle to conjecture. The theological transition which lasted all his life was at his death left incomplete. We may not guess at its completion. It is enough for us to observe its direction.

These conclusions as to the inner movement of Rammohun's mind suggest his place in history. The life is the life work. His own career of constant but incomplete transition constituted him the leader and the instrument of a kindred transition among his fellow-countrymen. The path he trod they seem destined to follow; more or less rapidly as opportunity and inducement vary, but perhaps none the less surely because the goal towards which he was moving was never by him visibly attained. Rammohun stands in history as the living bridge over which India marches from her unmeasured past to her incalculable future. He was the arch which spanned the gulf that yawned between ancient caste and modern humanity, between superstition and science, between despotism and democracy, between immobile custom and a conservative progress, between a bewildering polytheism and a pure, if vague, Theism. He was the mediator of his people, harmonizing in his own person often by means of his own solitary sufferings, the conflicting tendencies of immemorial tradition and of inevitable enlightenment.

The impact of Christian civilization, with its wide freedom and strong tolerance, upon the unreconciled juxtaposition of Islam and Hinduism, introduced into the life of the people of India a painful crisis.<sup>46</sup> There were new and fierce revulsions, there were attractions, powerful though hidden: there was an intense mental effervescence: there was the sudden generation of strange and composite ideas: there was, in short, a sort of silent explosion within the spiritual frame, which sent thrills of agony through every shattered and lacerated fragment. But the misery caused by the destructive consequences, although more obvious at first, cannot conceal the sympathetic and constructive forces at work. Of the result of this impact we may regard Rammohun as the personal type. He embodies the new spirit which arises from the compulsory mixture of races and faiths and civilizations,—he embodies its freedom of inquiry, its thirst for science, its large humane sympathy, its pure and sifted ethics, along with its reverent but not uncritical regard for the past, and prudent even timid disinclination towards revolt<sup>47</sup>. But in the life of Rammohun we see what we hope yet to have shown us in the progress of India, that the secret of the whole movement is religious. Amid all his wanderings Rammohun was

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46. The West meant much more than a mere Christian civilization to Rammohun and to India.—*Editors*.

47. The last expression is not happy. Throughout his life Rammohun had been a rebel though he always believed in proceeding cautiously. (Cf. above, p. 257, footnote 4). Caution however is obviously not the same thing as disinclination.—*Editors*.



saved by his faith. From the perfervid piety of his Pagan boyhood to the strong leanings which, in his latest years, he evinced towards Christianity he was led by his faith,—the purpose and passion of belief which he inherited from all the ages of India's history. He was a genuine outgrowth of the old Hindu stock ; in a soil watered by new influences, and in an atmosphere charged with unwonted forcing power, but still a true scion of the old stock. The Rajah was no merely occidentalized Oriental, no Hindu polished into the doubtful semblance of a European. Just as little was he, if we may use the term without offence, a spiritual Eurasian. If we follow the right line of his development we shall find that he leads the way from the Orientalism of the past, not to, but through Western culture, towards a civilization which is neither Western nor Eastern, but something vastly larger and nobler than both. He preserves continuity throughout, by virtue of his religion, which again supplied the motive force of his progressive movement. The power that connected and restrained, as well as widened and impelled, was religion.

Rammohun thus presents a most instructive and inspiring study for the New India of which he is the type and pioneer. He offers to the new democracy of the West a scarcely less valuable index of what our greatest Eastern dependency may yet become under the Imperial sway of the British commonalty. There can be little doubt that, whatever future the destinies may have in store for India, that future will be largely shaped

by the life and work of Rammohun Roy. And not the future of India alone. We stand on the eve of an unprecedented intermingling of East and West. The European and the Asiatic streams of human development, which have often tinged each other before, are now approaching a confluence which bids fair to form the one ocean-river of the collective progress of mankind. In the presence of that greater Eastern Question,—with its infinite ramifications, industrial, political, moral and religious,—the international problems of the passing hour, even the gravest of them, seem dwarfed into parochial pettiness. The nearing dawn of these unmeasured possibilities only throws into clearer prominence the figure of the man whose life-story we have told. He was, if not the prophetic type, at least the precursive hint, of the change that is to come.<sup>48</sup>

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48. Miss Clara Collet, niece of the authoress, in her letter to Dr. P. K. Sen (*vide* the latter's *Biography of a New Faith* Vol. I, Thacker Spink & Co., Calcutta, 1950, pp. 353-54) points out that the last few pages of the present *Life* record Rev. Stead's (the continuator's) *own impressions and estimate* of Rammohun's life and character. To quote her own words : "Having satisfied himself of the intrinsic greatness of Rammohun Roy, Mr. Stead simply set himself to work as the amenuensis of the historian, using his journalist's experience and skill in cutting down and selecting his material. The last pages (148-57 in the first edition) are admittedly Mr. Stead's own summary of the impression left on him at the end of his survey of the life and character of his subject." The corresponding pages in the present edition of the work would be 362-381. We should therefore regard these few pages of the present work as containing the *personal views* of the continuator, Rev. F. Herbert Stead, about Rammohun's life and work.—*Editors.*



## SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

### I

Mr. Amal Home has drawn our attention to the comment of "one of the judges of the Calcutta High Court" that this volume "does not contain *all* that the Raja communicated to the Board." The same authority is said to have informed Mr. Home that Rammohun's "*entire* evidence is to be found, in the Appendix to the *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the affairs of the East India Company*, published in 1831-33" (*Rammohun Roy: The Man and His Work*, Rammohun Centenary Publicity Booklet, No. 1, Calcutta, June 1933, compiled and edited by Amal Home, incorporated in *The Father of Modern India*, Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume, Part II p. 64). We have therefore followed Miss Mary Carpenter and Mr. Home in giving the following detailed references to the said *Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons* indicating specifically the places in it where the "Communications" and the Evidence of Rammohun are to be found :

(1) 1831, Vol. V, pp. 716-23 ; copy of communication between Rammohun Roy and the Board of Control relative to the Revenue and Judicial System of India ; 54 questions proposed to Rammohun Roy, and his answers, dated 19th August 1831. Subjects : Revenue System of India, Tenure of Land, Rate of Rent, Title to Land, Improvement of the State of the Cultivators and Inhabitants at large.

(2) Ibid, pp. 723-26 ; Appendix A : Paper on the Revenue System of India, by Rammohun Roy, dated London. August 19th, 1831.

(3) Ibid, pp. 726-39 ; 78 questions and answers, dated, London, September, 19th, 1831.

(4) Ibid, pp. 739-41 : 13 additional queries respecting the condition of India and answers, dated, London, September 28th, 1831.

(5) Volume VIII, 1831-32, Section V, pp. 341-43 : Remarks by Rammohun Roy are given on the settlement of Europeans in India, dated 14th July, 1832.

(6) Appendix to the Report of 1833, p. 366 : The Evidence of Rammohun Roy, respecting the conditions of the ryots in India.

A side note for reference, p. 366, opposite to this mention of Rammohun Roy, has these words, "Evidence before Committee of 1831, Evidence before this Committee, A to G, 35, p. 5 min.", which seems to show that the Rajah had been examined before a Committee of the House of Commons. (See Mary Carpenter's *Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta Edition, 1915, pp. 112-19 ; Cf. also *The Father of Modern India Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume Part II* p. 64).

Inquisitive readers would do well to compare the contents of Rammohun's published volume with the passages from the *Select Committee Report*, referred to, above.

Dr. Lant Carpenter's observations on Rammohun's "Communications" to the Board of Control may be quoted here : "His labours for his country had.....a much wider scope. He took an interest in whatever contributed or appeared to him likely to contribute to its welfare ; and his communications to our Legislature show with what closeness of observation, soundness of judgment and comprehensiveness of views he had considered the various circumstances which interfered with its improvement or which on the other hand tended to promote it. They show him to be at once the philosopher and the patriot. They are full of practical wisdom ; and there is reason to believe that they were highly valued by our Government, and that they aided in the formation of the new system by which the well being of our vast dependencies in India must be so greatly affected for good or for ill ; .. ..." (*Review of the Labours Opinions and Character of Rajah Rammohun Roy* London and Bristol, 1833, pp. 42-43)

## II

Two great qualities of Rammohun's political thought have always been its clarity and objectivity. As an Indian,



he certainly took legitimate pride in the great past achievements of his country (Cf. above, pp. 207-08). But at the same time he was clear-sighted enough to realise that the Indian civilization of his day had been passing through a phase of all-round decadence. The political and social chaos of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries had destroyed all semblance of administrative unity. The national character had sunk into an abyss of corruption and intrigue. A standard of social ethics was almost non-existent. Indigenous tradition was blissfully ignorant of the epoch-making achievements of European science and technology and was still clinging fondly to out-dated methods in the fields of agriculture and trade. In short the comatose India of the late eighteenth century had completely exhausted herself and lost the creative urge in almost every sphere of national life. Such an atmosphere could not certainly be congenial to the growth of progressive nationalism which would view the removal of foreign rule as only a half-measure and would never rest content until it could harmonise all the modern values with the best in the country's age-old culture. To such an attitude British rule was welcome inspite of all the curses it had brought in its wake, because through it India had been able to come in contact with the civilisation of the West. This was the only association that could revitalise her during the crisis. As the earliest champion of constructive nationalism, Rammohun therefore did not hesitate to extend a cordial welcome to British rule in India though he was not for a single moment blind to its darker aspects. This explains the eulogy with which he closes his *Final Appeal to the Christian Public* : "I now conclude my Essay by offering up thanks to the Supreme Disposer of the events of the universe for having unexpectedly delivered this country from the long-continued tyranny of its former Rulers, and placed it under the government of the English,—a nation who not only are blessed with the enjoyment of civil and political liberty, but also interest themselves in promoting liberty and social happiness, as well as free inquiry into literary and religious subjects, among those nations to which their influence extends." (*The*

*English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* edited by Kalidas Nag and Debajyoti Burman, Part VII, Calcutta 1958, pp. 177-78). The passage however reflects Rammohun's attitude towards British rule only partially. He himself never regarded this judgment as final and believed that the *future generation* would be, from experience, in a position to speak with greater authority on the advantages or disadvantages of the British empire. To quote from his *Brief Remarks Regarding Modern Encroachment on the Ancient Rights of Females According to the Hindu Law of Inheritance* (published in 1822): "At present the whole empire (with the exception of a few provinces) has been placed under the British power, and some advantages have already been derived from the prudent management of its rulers, from whose general character a hope of future quiet and happiness is justly entertained. The succeeding generation will, however, be more adequate to pronounce on the real advantages of this government (*The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* edited by Kalidas Nag and Debajyoti Burman, Part I, Calcutta 1945, p. 1n). This extremely shrewd and cautious observation indicates that in Rammohun's opinion only a long trial might show whether British rule would *ultimately* turn out to be a blessing for India.

While expressing the above mature view on the British administration of his own day, Rammohun did not hesitate to go further and visualise a future when India would completely regain her political independence. The following instances from his writings would go to support such a conclusion :

(a) In a letter to Mr. J. Crawford, dated August 18, 1828, he writes : "Supposing that some 100 years hence the Native character becomes elevated from constant intercourse with Europeans and the acquirements of general and political knowledge as well as of modern arts and sciences, is it possible that they will not have the spirit as well as the inclination to resist effectually any unjust and oppressive measures serving to degrade them in the scale of society ? It should not be lost sight of that the position of India is very different from



that of Ireland, to any quarter of which an English fleet may suddenly convey a body of troops that may force its way in the requisite direction and succeed in suppressing every effort of a refractory spirit. Were India to share one fourth of the knowledge and energy of that country she would prove from her remote situation, her riches and her vast population, either useful and profitable as a willing province, an ally of the British Empire or *troublesome and annoying as a determined enemy*. (italics ours—Editors.) (Cf. above, pp. 267-68).

(b) In his *Remarks on the Settlement in India by Europeans* Rammohun also clearly hints at the possibility of India becoming politically independent at some distant future : "If, however, events should occur to *effect a separation between the two countries* then still the existence of a large body of settlers (consisting of Europeans and their descendants ..) would bring that vast Empire in the East to a level with other large Christian countries in Europe"...Again a little later he goes on : "Yet.....if events should occur to *effect a separation which may arise from many accidental causes*, about which it is vain to speculate or make predictions), still friendly and highly advantageous commercial *intercourse may be kept up between two free and Christian countries* united as they will then be by resemblance of language religion and manners". (Italics ours—Editors ; *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* ed. Nag and Burman, Part III, pp. 82-83, 85 ; Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* pp. 458, 460 ; Cf. also above pp. 336-37, 338).

The above passages hint only at future possibilities. But Rammohun's statements to M. Victor Jacquemont, the French naturalist and traveller and Mr. Sandford Arnot are much more definite and straight-forward. Jacquemont records on June 25, 1829, after a conversation with Rammohun Roy in Calcutta, that the latter had said to him : "India requires many more years of English domination so that she might not have to lose many things while she is reclaiming her political independence" ("It faut à l' Inde bien des années de domination anglaise pour qu'elle puisse ne pas perdre beaucoup en ressaisissant son indépendance politique."—Victor Jacquemont

*Voyage dans l'Inde* Tome I, Paris 1841, p. 187). For an English translation of Jacquemont's remarks on Rammohun Roy, see Nirod Chandra Chaudhuri, "A Portrait of Rajah Rammohun Roy" in the *Modern Review* for June, 1926, pp. 689-92. To this we may add the testimony of Sandford Arnot who says about Rammohun: "He . . . . always contended . . . . for the necessity of *continuing British rule for at least forty or fifty years to come* for the good of the people themselves, . . ." (*Asiatic Journal* vol. xii, New Series, September to December, 1833, p. 212 ; Cf. above, p. 353 ; italics ours—Editors).

Rammohun then had certainly in view a time when India would stand independent of British rule. He was only anxious that before the termination of foreign domination on her soil, India might reap the full advantage of her contact with the West established through the medium of British administration and bring herself out of the clutches of medievalism in all spheres of national life. Perhaps no better summing up of Rammohun's position, is possible than in the words of Rev. William Adam who had more than anyone, else,—the opportunity of knowing the former's mind in this respect: "He saw,—a man of his acute mind and local knowledge could not but see—the selfish, cruel and almost insane errors of the English in governing India, but he also saw that their system of Government and policy had redeeming qualities not to be found in the native governments. Without seeking to destroy, therefore, his object was to reform and improve the system of foreign government to which his native country had become subject ; and without stimulating his countrymen to discontent or disaffection, his endeavour was by teaching them a pure religion and promoting among them an enlightened education to qualify them for the enjoyment of more extensive civil and political franchises than they yet possessed. . . . he joined with some noble-minded, far-seeing Englishmen who have expressed the opinion that the wisest and most honourable course, the justest and most humane, which England can pursue towards India is by education and by a gradual development of the principle of civil and political liberty in the public institutions she establishes and sanctions, to prepare the



natives ultimately to take the government of their own country into their own hands. To co-operate in bringing about such a result, was one of Rammohun Roy's unceasing aims ; . . . . .” (William Adam *A Lecture on the Life and Labours of Rammohun Roy* delivered in Boston, U. S. A , 1845 ; edited by Rakhal Das Haldar and published by G. P. Roy & Co., Calcutta 1879, pp. 26-27).

A moderniser as he principally is, Rammohun is also India's first dreamer of political independence in the modern age.

### III

It appears plain to any reader of the full text of Rammohun's *Remarks on the Settlement of India by Europeans* that its author most certainly did not anticipate the Christianization of India anywhere in the statement (Cf. the text in Majumdar's *Raja Rammohun's Roy and the Progressive Movements in India* No. 238, pp. 457-60, and also in *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* ed. Nag and Burman, Part III pp. 81-85). There are two references to Christianity in the India of the future, in the paper. First, while enumerating the advantages of the settlement in India of the Europeans Rammohun points out that should India be able to wrest her freedom from the British authorities in future, *the European settlers in this country and their descendants* would still continue to serve as a bond of union between a free India and other Christian countries of Europe by virtue of *their Christian Faith* (Majumdar, *Op. cit.* p. 458 ; *English Works* iii pp. 82-83 ; also above, pp. 336-37). There is thus *no question of the Indian population turning Christian*. Secondly, later in the statement in course of his description of the *fourth* disadvantage of European settlement in this country Rammohun speaks of the independent India of the future and England as “two free and Christian countries” (Majumdar *Op. cit.* p. 460 ; *English Works* iii. p. 85 ; above, p. 338). But the spirit here is the same. The *Christianity of the European settlers of this country* is held up as a *possible link* between free India and England.

It is the only meaning that appears to be consistent with the earlier remark.

We have already seen that Rammohun had stood resolutely against the idea of Indians being converted to Christianity and he had returned a polite but negative answer to Rev. Henry Ware's query "whether if it be desirable that the inhabitants of India should be converted to Christianity"? (Cf. above, pp. 165-66 ; *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* ed. Nag and Burman, Part IV p. 43). It may also be remembered that Rammohun had parted company from Rev. William Adam chiefly because the latter had desired to use the Anglo-Hindu School or the newly founded Brahmo Samaj for Unitarian Missionary propaganda (Cf. above, pp. 242-48).

It thus seems hardly possible to assent to the continuator's thesis that Rammohun had visualized a *Christian India* in the sense that the entire native population of this country would eventually be *converted to Christianity*. To say this however is not to deny Rammohun's great respect for Christ and Christianity as well as his firm conviction that the settlement of Europeans belonging to the Christian Faith, would be a great blessing for this country. All through his life he stuck passionately to the impression he had formed early in his career, that the moral precepts of Christianity were unrivalled in the realm of ethics and their dissemination in India would be one of the most desirable consequences of India's western contact. (Cf. above. pp. 153, 244-45). From this premise it was quite natural and easy for him to pass to the conclusion that the presence of a large body of Christian settlers from Europe in this country would quicken that process of dissemination and thus raise the standard of Indian public morals considerably. To absorb the best in the teaching of Christ is however not the same thing as *conversion* to Christianity.

Further, the continuator's assertion that Rammohun in the above statement, has pleaded a *socially anglicized India* "possessing the opulence intelligence and public spirit and also the language religion and manners of the English race", requires considerable modification. (Cf. above pp. 339, 341) Rammohun was a well-known advocate of the diffusion in this



country of a knowledge of European arts and sciences and its consequent benefits. This would according to him gradually weed out the caste system and the other superstitions and thus remove the barrier separating India from the West. The presence of European settlers in India would no doubt be a great helping factor from this point of view as it would certainly enable the Indians not only to take lessons in Western science and technology but also to imbibe from personal contact with and example of the immigrants, many of the remarkable qualities that had made Europe great. Along with the spread of Western education the bulk of the Indian people would also gradually come to speak the English language along with the European settlers. But nowhere in the statement has Rammohun given the slightest hint that it was his desire to see India *socially anglicized* ! He had, as we have seen, a dignified pride in his Indian and Asiatic heritage (Cf. above, pp. 207-08) and he was no believer in the inherent superiority of the West over the East (Cf. above, pp. 249-50). In his own way of life he never ceased to be an Indian in spite of his professed admiration for the West. All through his life it had been his persistent effort to absorb the best in the Western civilization without sacrificing his Oriental roots. This point has unfortunately been overlooked by the continuator (Rev. F. Herbert Stead) who belongs to that group of writers who have with all their admiration for Rammohun, misunderstood him here. A more recent example is Mr. Ulysses Young (*vide* his article "Rammohun Roy and the Modern World" in the *East and West*, Rome, Vol. V. No. 4, pp. 300-03)

#### IV

The reputation of Rammohun Roy as a remarkable man and a reformer had reached France long before his visit to Europe. M. D'Acosta, the editor of *The Times* at Calcutta, is said to have transmitted to Abbé Gregoire, Bishop of Blois (in France), in 1818, a number of Rammohun's publications with some account of the story of the latter's life and through the French clergyman Rammohun became extensively known and highly appreciated in France as early as the

second decade of the nineteenth century (L. Carpenter *Review of the Labours Opinions and Character of Rajah Rammohun Roy* London and Bristol, 1833, p. 107). Abbé Gregoire circulated a French pamphlet on Rammohun and his works which he had composed on the basis of the informations supplied by M. D'Acosta and this was afterwards inserted in the *Chronique Religieuse* and part of it was published in English garb in the *Monthly Repository* (vol. xv, 1820). (Mary Carpenter *Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy* Calcutta 1915, pp. 48-54). In 1820 the *Revue Encyclopédique* (vol. vii) published a list of eight of Rammohun's works (quoted by Adrienne Moore *Rammohun Roy and America* Calcutta, 1942, pp. 121-22). Later on another list of his works is found to appear in the August (1823) issue of the *Journal Asiatique* (pp. 117-19), the organ of the *Société Asiatique* of France. The October (1823) issue of the same journal published a detailed article on Rammohun and his works by M. Lanjuinais ('Observations sur quelques ouvrages de Rammohun Roy', *Journal Asiatique* I Ser., Tome III, pp. 243-49). Subsequently the *Société Asiatique* (the French counterpart of the Asiatic Societies of India and Great Britain) appointed a three-member commission consisting of M. Lanjuinais, M. Klaproth and M. Burnouf to investigate into Rammohun's competence as scholar and to decide whether he could be considered fit for the honorary membership of that body. On the unanimous recommendation of the Commission, Rammohun was elected honorary member of the *Société Asiatique* on the 5th July, 1824 (*Journal Asiatique* I Ser. Tome V, Paris, 1824, p. 62). Rammohun's name and fame had thus been already familiar in the scholarly circle of France when he visited that country and the warm welcome he received during his short visit was nothing unexpected. Of the foreign countries France can claim the distinction of having been the first to bestow academic honour on Rammohun Roy. (See for a thorough discussion of the whole topic Dilip Kumar Biswas' Bengali article "Rammohun Rāya O Pharāsī Vidvanmandalī" in the *Viśvabhārati Patrika* Vol. xv. No. 1, pp. 62-74). The eminent French scholar M. Garcin de Tassy had also apparently known Rammohun for a



long time, for he specifically mentions having received many letters from him in Hindusthani and in English (“...que J’ai en l’avantage de voir souvent pendant son séjour à Paris, et dont J’ai reçu plusieurs lettres en hindoustani et en anglais”.—Garcin de Tassy *Histoire de la littérature Hindouie et Hindoustani* Seconde édition, Paris, Tome II p. 548). Another instance of the great popularity of Rammohun’s name in France in the third decade of the nineteenth century, is furnished by the testimony of Victor Jacquemont who had already heard of the Indian savant’s great talents, before he left France for India and eventually met him in Calcutta in 1829 “(Ram-Mohan-Roy est le brahme savant dont les ouvrages de polémique religieuse contre les docteurs hindous et les missionnaires européens ont fait connaître le nom jusqu’en France. Je savais avant de venir dans l’Inde qu’il était un Orientaliste habile, un subtil logicien, un dialecticien irresistible : mais j’ignorais qu’il était le meilleur des hommes”—Victor Jacquemont *Voyage dans l’Inde* Tome I, Paris, 1841 p. 183). We may also take note here of the high tribute paid to Rammohun by the celebrated Sismondi in his article “Recherches sur la syesteme colonial pour le Gouvernement de l’Inde” in the *Revue Encyclopédique* November, 1824. For the English version see Mary Carpenter, *The Last Days* pp. 20-21.

It is pleasant to think that Rammohun’s great admiration for France and the French nation had been reciprocated in so warm and honourable a manner by eminent Frenchmen of his day.

## V

### A. Rammohun Roy’s letters to C. W. Wynn.

In his note dated, April 16th, 1832, Rammohun writes : “From the high opinion R. R. entertains of Mr. Wynn’s constitutional learning, he feels a wish to know from him confidentially whether in Mr. Wynn’s opinion R. R. is eligible to sit in Parliament. He begs to add that *it is not from any ambition to assume so arduous an office but from a desire to pave the way for his countrymen for which object R. R. might for a few months, undertake the task* (italics ours—Editors).

Mr. Wynn in his reply gave a general assurance without definitely committing himself : "...I conceive generally that any person born within the British dominions is a British subject and as such here entitled to all the privileges of a native of Great Britain . . ."

Rammohun further wrote in his letter dated April 19, 1832, to Mr. Wynn : "I will seriously reflect on the purport of your letter and shall not fail to communicate the result if I can come to any determination on the subject."

We do not know how far Rammohun proceeded in the matter after this. Possibly his illness and death cut the project short. What one should particularly remember is that he toyed with the idea at this stage of his life to further the interests of his countrymen as he says in his note of April 16, 1832. It is interesting to reflect that had he been spared a few years more he might possibly have succeeded in preceding Dadabhai Nauroji and Saklatwala as the first Indian Member of the British Parliament.

The above correspondence, it has been said, was brought to light by Mr. Sivnarayan Sen (Cf. above, p. 353n). Rammohun's letters to Mr. Wynn have subsequently been printed also in his *English Works* ed. Nag and Burman. Part IV pp. 104-05.

#### **B. Rammohun Roy's letter dated August 25, 1833.**

The following is the text of the letter the original of which is preserved in the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London (No. 92674) :

48, Bedford Square  
August 25th 1833.

Dear Sir,

As every person of a reflecting turn of mind feels interested about antiquities, I have the pleasure of sending the accompanying translation which gives an account of the system of religion prevailing in Central India at the time of Alexander the Great and beg your acceptance of it. My health has been rather indifferent ; I therefore intend to



proceed to Wales through Bristol by Thursday next. I hope you will present my best regards to your worthy parents. I have the honor to be

Dear Sir

Your most obedient servant

Rammohun Roy

The identity of the addressee is not known. In one respect the contents bear resemblance to those of the letter written by Rammohun to Mr. Woodford of Brighton, on the 22nd August, 1833 (Cf. above, p. 352). Here, as also in the said letter to Mr. Woodford, Rammohun mentions having attached a "translation" containing an account of the system of religion which prevailed in Central India at the time of the Indian invasion of Alexander the Great. One wonders whether this "translation" was made by Rammohun himself from the original Greek writings of Alexander's companions or of subsequent authors like Megasthenes. If so, it would be a fresh and eloquent testimony to his mastery of Greek. It should be remembered that the official English translation of these accounts were published long after Rammohun's death.

## VI

It is unfortunate that none of his friends, contemporaries and near-contemporaries in England ever made any attempt to record systematically the development of Rammohun's political and social thought during the latter's last days. Biographers like Miss Mary Carpenter, Miss Collet and Rev. H. F. Stead (the continuator of Miss Collet's narrative) were perhaps temperamentally not quite suited to the task and the accounts left by Mr. Sandford Arnot and Mr. James Sutherland are also inadequate in this respect. Apart from the temperamental lack of interest, most of them were obsessed with the nineteenth century English concept of the omnipotence of the British Empire and occasionally there is to be perceived in some of the accounts a conscious or unconscious effort to

harmonise Rammohun's views with the official administrative policy of the British Government. Thus paying tribute to Rammohun's evidence on Indian affairs before the Board of Control, Dr. Carpenter commended it for having "aided in the formation of the new system by which the well-being of our vast dependencies in India must be so greatly affected . . ." (italics ours—*Editors* ; Cf. above, pp. 383). The continuator shows himself frankly apprehensive of Rammohun's French sympathies (Cf. above, pp. 334-35), and assures us that after all Rammohun's suggestions for the reform of the Indian Government "were of no extreme type." (Cf. above p. 354). In his final summing up he further characterizes one of the features of the new ideals represented by the Raja as a "prudent even timid disinclination towards revolt" (Cf. above. p. 379), and holds Rammohun as an index of "what our greatest Eastern dependency may yet become under the Imperial sway of the British commonalty" (Cf. above, p. 380). Mr. Arnot in the article in the *Asiatic Journal*, Vol. XII, New Series, (September to December, 1833). hastens to prove that Rammohun was a moderate in politics (pp. 211-12). He protests against the opinion of "a writer in the daily papers" that Rammohun was a republican. "I know of no ground for this opinion ;" he says, "if there be any, it must have reference to an early period in his life. He may have approved of it, in theory, while surrounded by power more or less arbitrary from the form of government existing in his country ;..." (p. 211). Mr. James Sutherland in his excellent sketch (*India Gazette* February 18, 1834, reprinted in the *Calcutta Review* Vol. 57, No. 1, p. 69) also expresses the opinion that Rammohun was not a republican in politics *at least so far as England was concerned* and he "admired republicanism in the abstract and thought that in America it worked well". It is thus not difficult to see that these valuable narratives are at least sometimes coloured by a tendency on the part of the writers to emphasize Rammohun's role as the 'loyal subject of the Empire'.

Rammohun's sympathies for the cause and ideals of



Revolution all over the world and his vision of complete political independence for his country in future, are well-known and need not be discussed again. (Cf. above, pp. 161-63, 385-87 ; regarding the French Revolution, see Sutherland's testimony, above, p. 308.) But from the accounts of both Arnot and Sutherland it appears that at least in some circles in England there was an impression that Rammohun had been a *confirmed republican* in politics. However much both of them might try to explain it away, they had not been able to ignore it. There are no means at present of ascertaining the grounds for the growth of such a belief. It is however significant that both Arnot and Sutherland have been obliged to admit that republicanism at least as an abstract principle, did form a part of Rammohun's political thought.

More revealing in this respect are Arnot's remarks on Rammohun's attitude towards the Grey Ministry after his return from France. "He had been", says Arnot, "an enthusiastic advocate of the Grey administration from his arrival in Europe, till his departure for France, in the autumn of last year. Whether it was that he imbibed some fresh light from Louis Philippe and his subjects, or that the First Reformed Parliament disappointed him or that he had taken some personal disgust at the present ministry (the most probable of the three) he became most bitterly opposed to it....He was in the habit of inveiging against it in the strongest...terms." (*Asiatic Journal* New Series, Vol. xii, September to December, 1833, p. 212) That this is a faithful representation of Rammohun's views, is proved by the following extract from his letter to Mr. Woodford, dated August 22, 1833 (Cf. above, p. 352 ; also *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* ed. Nag and Burman Part IV p. 93): "The reformed Parliament has disappointed the people of England ; the ministers may perhaps redeem their pledge during next session." Rammohun had come to England full of enthusiasm for the Reform question and had been over-joyed at the passing of the First Reform Bill (Cf. above, pp. 333-34). What is then the cause of this *volte face* during the last year of his life ? It is not possible to find a satisfactory answer to

the question, but the few facts we have before us, might suggest certain lines of enquiry.

To the working class, the Reform Act and the Reformed Parliament had come as a great disappointment. It has been well-observed : "Although the Reform Bill was passed by strictly constitutional means, it could not have become law without an effective threat of revolution. To make such a threat effective, the middle class had to enlist the support of the working men, and this necessitated raising their hopes" (Bertrand Russell *Freedom and Organization* 1814-1914, London 1934, p. 145). But now the workers found themselves "voteless under a Government standing for the ideas and policy of the rising middle and the employing class". The immediate consequence of this disappointment and disaffection of the wage-earners was the rapid growth of the trade-union movement which was enthusiastically led by Robert Owen, the founder of British Socialism, up to 1834 (G. D. H. Cole *The Life of Robert Owen*, London, 1930, pp. 266-92). It is interesting to find that it was during this phase of Owen's life (sometime in 1832 or 1833 ?) that Rammohun came to form his acquaintance. From the account of Mr. Recorder Hill it appears that the two first met at a dinner party given by a mutual friend and they had an argument in course of which Owen unsuccessfully attempted to bring Rammohun over to his socialistic opinions (Cf. Mary Carpenter *The Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy* Calcutta 1915, p. 130 : Cf. also above, p. 329). Fresh light is however thrown on the relationship between the two, from Rammohun Roy's letter, dated April 19, 1833, to Owen's son Robert Dale, which proves that the main point of disagreement between Rammohun and Robert Owen was the question of the admissibility of religion as a helping factor in "promoting the social, domestic and political welfare" of mankind. Deeply religious as he himself was, Rammohun could not assent to Owen's total rejection of religion. But this did not hinder him from expressing his warm approval of Owen's socialistic programme. He is found to conclude the letter by saying : "My desire to see you and your father crowned with success in your benevolent undertakings, has emboldened me to make these observations, a freedom which I hope,



you will, in consideration of my motives, excuse". (italics ours.—Editors). Here is perhaps a possible clue to the development of Rammohun's political thought during the last days of his life. He had been interested in the lot of the common man from an early period of his career (Cf. Nagendranath Chatterjee *Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rayer Jibancharit* 5th Ed. pp. 510-12) and in his "Communication" to the Board of Control regarding the Revenue system of India he appears publicly as the champion of the peasantry (Cf. above, pp. 319-20 ; also *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* ed. Nag and Barman, Part III pp. 45-47, 58, 61). It is no wonder therefore that to a philanthropist of his stature Owen's socialistic programme would have a strong attraction inspite of their fundamental difference in outlook over religion. It is possible though unfortunately definite evidence is lacking, that the origin of Rammohun's disillusionment regarding the Reformed Parliament of 1832 would ultimately have to be traced to this source.

For the text of Rammohun's letter written to Robert Dale Owen, see Appendix VII.

## VII

These "evidences" in favour of Rammohun's leanings towards a 'full fledged acceptance of the Christian faith' have been considered sufficient by Dr. Lant Carpenter (*A Review of the Labours, Opinions and Character of Rammohun Roy* pp. 82-85) and also by Miss Mary Carpenter who followed her father in virtually identifying Rammohun with Unitarian Christianity (*The Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy*, Calcutta 1915, pp. 152-56). But their conclusion did not go unchallenged and was later criticised in detail by Kishory Chand Mitra (*vide* his article "Rammohun Roy" in the *Calcutta Review* Vol. IV, 1845, pp. 387-92 : and also his review of the first edition of Miss Carpenter's *Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy* in the same journal, Vol. XLIV, 1867, pp. 219-33) and Nagendranath Chatterjee (*Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rayer Jibancharit* 5th edition pp. 606-11). In fact earlier in India also we witness similar eagerness in the circle

of Rammohun's Unitarian friends to prove him a Christian or at least a near-Christian (Cf. above, pp. 210-14). It is but natural that honest and sincere men like William Adam and Lant Carpenter with their missionary propensities and their conception of Hinduism as "idolatry", would see a considerable amount of Christian influence on Rammohun's religious creed. Rammohun's great reverence for Christianity in general and his repeated emphasis on the impressive moral beauty of the teachings of Christ undoubtedly provided some ground for such a belief. But as it has been ably shown by Nagendranath Chatterjee, this was in no way inconsistent with Rammohun's universal outlook in religion (Chatterjee, *Op. Cit.* pp. 606-07, 609-10). It should further be noted that in Europe he had practically no opportunity to associate himself with any religious bodies other than the different sects of Christians. His religious discussions and conversations in the West therefore had necessarily to be on Christian themes. It was not possible to discuss the subtle points of Hindu or Islamic doctrines in the circle that welcomed Rammohun during his English visit. As he believed in the quintessence of every religion, "he was able to approach" in the words of the continuator, "the advocates of the different creeds with a sympathy and emphasis on points of agreement, which they could only interpret as complete adhesion." (Cf. above, pp. 369-70). But that at heart he lived true to the Indian Vedantic tradition, is proved by his constant utterance of the holy *praṇava* (ॐ) during his last hours as faithfully observed by those who were near him (Cf. above, p. 361). Further, immediately before the Raja's death, one of his Indian attendants, Ramratna Mukherji uttered a prayer in the dying man's ears in which as Dr. Carpenter notes, "the frequent repetition of the word 'OM' was alone distinguished" (*A Review of the Labours Opinions and Character of Rammohun Roy* p. 121). Earlier in his career also Rammohun had always shown his preference for the contemplative aspects of Oriental religions like Hinduism and Islam. To Chandrasekhar Deb he declared that Hinduism, particularly of the Vedantic brand, was the most advanced religion of the world if by 'religion'



one would mean the "blessings of self-knowledge" (Cf. above, pp. 97-98). Kishory Chand Mitra records that Rammohun once expressed a desire to retire to a solitary cave in his old age and spend his last days studying the *Vedānta* and the *Mesnavi* of the Persian mystic and poet Rumi (*Calcutta Review* Vol IV. 1845, p. 366). Unfortunately this side of his spiritual life was almost a sealed book to his Christian friends in England.

Regarding the "evidences" collected by Dr. Carpenter in favour of his hypothesis that Rammohun was heading towards a full-fledged acceptance of the Christian creed, it would be enough to say that one may differ over the question of their interpretation, although one may never doubt their authenticity. It is quite certain that John Foster and J. B. Estlin had a discussion [about the Christian doctrines and miracles with Rammohun at Bristol and whatever Rammohun might have said, they quite honestly and sincerely convinced themselves that he had been expressing his faith in the Resurrection and the Christian miracles. It is however human nature to give sometimes a subjective colouring to facts and conclusions one receives from outside, and in sincere adherents of a religious creed the possibility is admittedly greater than usual. We cannot be sure that the present case does not furnish a notable instance of this common human characteristic.

Further, it may be observed, that even allowing for a moment that Rammohun did express during his last days in Bristol, a faith in the Resurrection and the Christian miracles, it is not easy to see how that can lead to the inference as to his unquestionable acceptance of Christianity. Mr. Estlin's disclosure that the Indian savant denied the Divinity of Christ but emphasized the "Divine mission of Christ",—clearly points to the opposite direction. It is a position which any non-Christian might take without compromising his own particular religious tenets. Miracles again are no monopoly of Christianity—and are the stock-in-trade of practically all the religious systems of the world. Belief in the resurrection of saints has a long history in India and form part practically of all the popular Indian creeds. An Indian therefore can perfectly believe in the Resurrection of Christ without necessarily adopting Christianity.

## VIII

The controversy started with the claim advanced by Mr. Sandford Arnot that Rammohun's "literary work in English owed more than was generally supposed" to the assistance of his secretary i.e. Arnot himself. We learn from the letter of H. H. Wilson to Dewan Ramkamal Sen (Cf. above, pp. 355-56), that Arnot had already started the game during Rammohun's life-time. As the Raja's secretary in England he had begun to press his employer for the payment of large sums of money "which he called arrears of salary", and threatened Rammohun, *in case of non-payment*, to claim as his own writing all that Rammohun had published in England. It is however significant that inspite of these private threats of blackmail, Arnot had not the courage to make any public statement to that effect, as long as Rammohun lived. After the latter's death, the claim was put forward *twice* in print. Better known is the sketch in the *Asiatic Journal*, New Series, Vol. XII (September to December 1833) in which it was declared (p. 209): "It has been said that he [Rammohun] wrote English much better than he spoke it. The reason is that what he spoke was really his own ; but his writings were generally, to some extent, the composition of others. We are assured, on good authority, that during the period he was in Europe, except for a few months, besides an amanuensis, he had the constant assistance, in drawing up all papers or letters of any importance, (his remarks on the revenue and judicial systems of India, on the suttee question, etc.) from an old Indian friend, connected with the press and politics of Bengal ; and that he scarcely sent a line out of his hands without his secretary's revision, unless, as often happened, it was actually composed by him beforehand. How much his reputation as an elegant writer, may therefore be attributable to others, both here and in India, can only be conjectured. As he was exceedingly ambitious of literary fame, he took care, both in Europe and in India, to obtain the best assistance he could get, both European and native. His works therefore, do not furnish an absolute criterion of his literary talents, although these were considerable". The article in the *Asiatic Journal* is not wholly the formal composition of Arnot. (Cf. *Asiatic Journal* Vol XVI, New Series, January to April



1835, p 24.) The portions marked off by inverted commas, are directly from his pen. The rest was the work of another hand. There is however no doubt that the entire piece was largely inspired by Arnot and was based on materials supplied by him. The passage quoted above, though it does not form part of the sections said to have been directly written by him, could not have been included without his collaboration and it can be safely assumed that the "old Indian friend connected with the press and politics of Bengal" is in the present context none but Arnot himself. Contemporaries in England knew it and rightly associated Arnot with the article. For the same assertion had already been made by him directly under his own name, earlier in a letter to the *Times*, London, November 23, 1833, p. 3, in the following slightly different language : "I drew almost every other paper, letter, and note, great and small, which he wrote in this country, for above two years, from the time of his arrival in Europe as Envoy of the King of Delhi, during which I acted as his secretary."

Mr. John Hare, brother of David Hare, and one of the closest associates of Rammohun in England, sent the following letter of protest to the *Times*, December 11, 1833, p. 6, giving a dignified reply to Arnot :

To,

The Editor of the *Times*

Sir,

I regret much to be compelled to solicit the insertion of a few remarks in your journal, devoted as it is, so usefully to subjects of public importance, on one which is to a considerable degree of a private nature, but as my remarks relate to an eminent individual lately deceased the Rajah Rammohun Roy.....

Mr. Arnot however takes occasion to introduce in this incidental discussion assertions of much importance to the literary and moral character of the Rajah Rammohun Roy, and which it is impossible, consistently in duty, for those of his friends who have it in their power and revere his memory, not to controvert. I allude to the bold assertions first made by

him in your paper, and subsequently repeated in another highly respectable publication, that he "drew up" from the Rajah's instructions merely, "every paper, letter, note, great and small, which he wrote in this country for about two years." I have had personal observation of the Rajah's literary and other pursuits during the whole period alluded to by Mr. Arnot, and I am perfectly acquainted with his uniform mode of composition, both for the press and epistolary correspondence. I therefore, with such means of judging, should express my utter astonishment that Mr. Arnot could make such an assertion, if I had not been already prepared for it previously to the Rajah's death, from having become cognizant of a pecuniary demand made on him by Mr. Arnot, supported on the intimidating influence of these assertions, from which the last days of the Rajah were employed in defending himself and literally the last stroke of his pen occupied in denying.

Under these circumstances, I consider it as a sacred duty to lay the whole statement of the facts before the public that it may form a correct opinion between the Rajah and Mr. Arnot.

I had hoped not to have been compelled to advert in any public manner to this painful subject, connected, as I fear it was, with a much more painful result, and particularly wishing to avoid anything likely to occasion collision over the poor Rajah's recent grave; but Mr. Arnot has with such pertinacity and deliberation come before the public with assertions so much to the prejudice of the Rajah's fair name, both as to literary talents and ingenuousness, that there appears no alternative left for those possessed of the facts and of the Rajah's own sentiments and declarations in denial of such assertions, but to submit them to an impartial public in defence of one who is no longer here to defend himself.

J. H.

But the most detailed and effective reply to Arnot's accusations came from Dr. Lant Carpenter who had devoted a section of his book *A Review of the Labours, Opinions and Character of Rammohun Roy* to a searching examination of the derogatory remarks of Rammohun's erstwhile secretary. We



are appending here the relevant portions of his remarks 'A Review of the Labours, Opinions and Character of Rammohun Roy London and Bristol, 1833, pp. 128-36) :

"The last topic I have to consider is a derogatory statement as to *aid received by the Rajah in the composition of his works* ; in itself more definite than the foregoing respecting his intellectual powers, more imposing and extensive in its influence, and, apparently, less tangible for refutation ; which, nevertheless, is without any just foundation. "It has been said" (are the words of the Asiatic Journal, p. 209), "that he wrote English much better than he spoke it. The reason is that what he spoke was really his own ; but his writings were generally, to some extent, the composition of others. We are assured, on good authority, that during the period he was in Europe, except for a few months, besides an amanuensis, he had the constant assistance, in drawing up all papers or letters of any importance, (his remarks on the revenue and judicial systems of India, on the suttee question, &c.) from an old Indian friend, connected with the press and politics of Bengal ; \* and that he scarcely sent a line out of his hands without his secretary's revision, unless, as often happened, it was actually composed by him beforehand. How much of his reputation, as an elegant writer, may therefore be attributable to others, both here and in India, can only be conjectured. As he was exceedingly ambitious of literary fame, he took care, both in Europe and in India, to obtain the best assistance he could get, both European and native. His works, therefore, do not furnish an absolute criterion of his literary talents, although these were no doubt considerable."

Previously, as it appears, to the receiving of this statement, "on good authority", the Asiatic Journal had (in p. 202) expressed itself as follows.

"The admiration which the writings of Ram Mohun now began to excite in Europe as well as in India, (for he and his works were at this time extensively known in France,) was not

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\* The expression is rather obscure ; but the 'old Indian friend', and the "Secretary" immediately mentioned, must mean the same person.

limited to the justness of the reasoning, the soundness of the reflections, and the general good sense which pervaded them ; his correct English style was a subject of astonishment to those who know with what difficulty even a native of foreign Europe acquires a critical knowledge of its niceties. Upon this point, however, we shall have something to say by and bye." The last sentence obviously arose from subsequent information.

I observe (1), in reference to this last-cited paragraph, that an oriental scholar, familiar from his youth with the *Persian* and *Arabic*, (to say nothing of the Sanscrit,) and accustomed to all the refinements of grammar in these languages and his own, would be far more prepared to acquire the power of accurate composition in the English language than almost any "native of foreign *Europe*". I have letters from our eminent Persian visitor, Jaāfar Hewsainey, who with Meerza Saulih came to Bristol in 1818, after he had been four years in England, which, though Oriental in thought, are more English in texture, than would reasonably be expected from a native of France after residing among us twice that period. And at the late Scientific Meeting at Cambridge, I heard a young Egyptian, Homer Effendi, deliver an extemporaneous speech, which was marked by the correctness of its English, far beyond what we generally observe from foreign Europeans.

But again (2), "the justness of the reasoning, the soundness of the reflections, and the general good sense which pervaded the writings of Rammohun Roy", are independent of the correctness of the English style ; and they constitute the essence of a composition. If therefore, as insinuated in the first-cited paragraph, the papers, letters, &c. of the Rajah, were ever "actually composed" by his Secretary, then the Rajah was himself the amanuensis. But, as will appear, the Secretary had no claim either to the composition or to the English.

(3) The Rajah, however, in my judgment, did *not* "write English much better than he spoke it". He manifested, in conversation, singular precision in the selection and in the arrangement of words ; and where he felt at ease, and had no apprehension of captious opposition or criticism, he spoke



with great fluency also. Persons who did not discriminate between his style, and his pronunciation of our language, have often expressed surprise that he spoke English so ill. But they would at once have seen their error, if they could have read what they had heard, by its being taken down, without his knowledge, as it was uttered. I have already remarked ( p. 43 ) that the last portion of the Rajah's Exposition, ( in which, from the nature of the subject, he writes with the greatest freedom, ) "is so strongly characteristic of his style in conversation, that, while reading it, one seems to hear him uttering the words." I never heard him converse with less correctness, in point of English ; though there was occasional hesitation in the selection of words.

(4) As to his power of *speaking* English, we may go back *fifteen years*, and take the declaration of Lieut. Col. Fitzclarence, who was "well acquainted with him", that his "eloquence in our language" was even then "very great", and that he had "gained a thorough acquaintance with the English language and literature". In 1818, "says Mr. Buckingham" (Month. Rep. for 1823) "I was introduced to Rammohun Roy at the house of Mr. Eneas Mackintosh ( now in London ) and was surprised at the unparalleled accuracy of his language, never having before heard *any* foreigner of Asiatic birth speak so well, and esteeming his fine choice of words as worthy [of] the imitation even of Englishmen". Mr. Buckingham had first conversed with him in Arabic ; but accident changing the conversation to English, he was ( he says ) "delighted and surprised at his perfection in this tongue". After mentioning his great acquirements in the languages, he says, "In English he is competent to converse freely on the most abstruse subjects".<sup>49</sup>

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49. To this we may add the evidence of Mr. Recorder Hill who was present when Rammohun was having his argument with Robert Owen, and notes that the Raja "spoke our language in marvellous perfection." (Mary Carpenter *The Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy*. p. 130.)  
—Editors.

(5) As to his power of composition in *writing*, there is clear internal evidence that his works are essentially, and even formally, his own. No sound and experienced judge of style, could read any part of his writings without perceiving characteristics which decide the source. A unity and identity of style runs through them. There is a peculiar simplicity in the mode of expression which forms one of the striking characteristics of his writings, and which identifies the Author.... In Constable's Edinburgh Magazine for Sept. 1823, is an interesting and ably written letter respecting him, (copied into the Monthly Repository of the same year,) obviously from the pen of some one personally well acquainted with him. The writer gives a note from Rammohun Roy, "written without the slightest aid or preparation", the neat correctness of which proves that he needed no aid when he *had* time for preparation. "His proficiency in English (says the writer) is best shown by the style of his composition, as the powers of his mind are by the force of his reasonings which have been declared by one of the ablest judges living, to be stronger and clearer than any thing yet produced on the side of the question which he has espoused"...referring to the controversy with the Missionaries. And he afterwards says, "For the recent commencement of the Bengalee and Persian newspapers in Calcutta, much, if not all, is due to Rammohun Roy's patronage and exertions ; *and many of the best articles published in them are ascribed to his pen.* His argumentative talents are of the first order ; and are aided by a remarkable memory, exceeding patience, and the gentlest temper.".. Every thing conspires to prove, that even ten years ago, there was a general impression in Calcutta, that he had attained a singular proficiency in English composition ; and most certainly, he did not in England require the aid of a native pen to compose his memorials and letters. The fact is, he was remarkably tenacious of his own modes of expression ; and may be said to have piqued himself on his grammatical knowledge of our language, and his proper selection and arrangement of words. When dictating, he rarely departed from his own judgment in either ; and when revising, it was he who made the corrections. The original of the admirable replies on the revenue



and judicial systems of India still exists, as he dictated them, with the corrections in his own hand-writing ; and considering the nature of the information given, and the sentiments expressed, together with the characteristic expression of them, it is not too much to say that none but himself could have written them.

His "infirmities", (says the Asiatic Journal, in introducing the paragraph which has led to these statements,) "though not obvious to the world, could not be concealed from those who lived in closed intercourse with him". Certainly he made no effort to conceal them, whatever they were. Ingenuousness and candour marked his friendly intimacies. Little is added to the views I have already given of his character, when I say that his chief infirmity, (to use the words of Mr. Arnot, in his well-written memoir in the Athenaeum,) was "a want of firmness to say that which would be unpleasant to individuals or bodies of men" ; and of the "courage to say NO". This infirmity, united with the unsuspecting candour of his disposition, led him sometimes to yield his confidence, where greater caution, or firmness, or knowledge of mankind, would have made him withhold it. ..But the paragraph, is employed to introduce a charge of a far different nature, affecting not merely his literary attainments, but his uprightness of character, and presenting him as always in a mask. ..I am happy in having the power to refute the charge, by the testimony of those who lived in the closest and most constant intercourse with him.

(6) Mr. Joseph Hare...his brother fully agreeing with him ...assures me, that the Rajah was constantly in the habit of dictating, to those who were for the time acting as amanuenses, in phraseology requiring no improvement, whether for the press or for the formation of official documents—such verbal amendments only excepted, as his own careful revision supplied before the final completion of the manuscript : that he often had recourse to friends to write from his dictation : among others to himself and the members of his family : that it is his full conviction, that, from the day of the Rajah's arrival in this country, he stood in no need of

any assistance except that of a mere *mechanical* hand to write : and that he has often been struck...and recollects that he was particularly so at the time the Raja was writing his Answers to the Queries on the Judicial and Revenue Departments...with his quick and correct diction, and his immediate perception of occasional errors when he came to revise the matter. These facts I and others have repeatedly heard from the Mr. Hares ; and I rest with conviction upon them. It is happy for the Rajah's memory that he lived in the closest intimacy and confidence with friends who are able and willing to defend it, wherever truth and justice require.

...with such critical and logical accuracy in the use of the English language as he undoubtedly possessed, with a mode of composition in which precision clearness and effect on the hearer's convictions seem the chief aim, with so obvious a unity of style as runs through his writings at various periods and so perfect an adaptation of it to the character of the sentiments expressed and with such testimony as is borne by his domestic friends to his actual habits of composition, it is not too much to expect that the well-judging part of the public will not be influenced by representations which in proportion to their influence throw a mist around his services and even his character to mislead those who did not know him personally and thoroughly. By those who had this privilege no such influence can be received."

Both Mr. John Hare and H. H. Wilson were convinced as it appears from the letter of the former to the *Times* and that of the latter to Dewan Ramkamal Sen, that the real reason behind Arnot's venomous outburst was his failure to fleece Rammohun during the latter's life-time by threats of blackmail. Wilson does not conceal his real opinion of Arnot when he says in his letter to Ramkamal Sen : "...Rammohun had got amongst a low, needy, unprincipled set of people, and found out his mistake, I suspect when too late, which preyed upon his spirits and injured his health" (Cf. above, p. 356). The evidence of such a person would in itself be considered "suspect" by impartial students of history. In fact by making those wild statements Arnot was laying himself open to the charge of self-contradiction.



tion, for, in course of a life-sketch of Rammohun in the *Athenaeum*, London, October 5, 1833, he himself had previously paid eloquent tribute to Rammohun as a linguist in the following words : "The Rajah was acquainted more or less with ten languages : Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Hindusthani, Bengali, English, Hebrew, Greek, Latin and French. The two first he knew critically as a scholar, the third fourth fifth and sixth he spoke and wrote fluently ; in the eighth perhaps his studies did not extend much beyond the originals of the Christian scriptures ; and in the latter two his knowledge was apparently more limited" (quoted in *The Father of Modern India : Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume* Part II p. 132). It will be noticed that here Arnot includes *English* among the languages that *Rammohun is said to have spoken and written fluently !* In a rejoinder published in the *Asiatic Journal* Vol. XII, New Series, (September to December, 1833), (p. 288 footnote), Arnot gives another amazing instance of self-contradiction when he says : "He [Rammohun] spoke and wrote Bengali with classic elegance ; in Hindusthani as a matter of course, he conversed with utmost ease, *as well as in English*". (italics ours—*Editors*.)

It is thus not difficult to understand that his statement in the *Times* and the accusations which he managed to get inserted in the original article of the *Asiatic Journal* were prompted by something other than consideration for truth.

The most interesting part of the controversy however is that the merciless exposures of Mr. Hare and Dr. Carpenter had completely taken the wind out of Arnot's sails. He retraced his steps and in the afore-mentioned rejoinder in the *Asiatic Journal* (Vol. XII, New Series, p. 289) had to come out with a feeble confession : "I claim no credit whatever for this. I did no more than, I suppose, every secretary does ; that is, ascertains from his principal, what he wishes to say or prove on any given subject, receives a rough outline, and works it out in his own way, making as many points and giving as much force of diction, as he can. Is it expected or usual that an ambassador or envoy should be his own secretary ? Is the fame of Prince Talleyrand injured by

acknowledging some one in the same capacity ?” Sandford Arnot had thus been put in his place by the lashing rebukes of Hare and Carpenter !

We would have considered the detailed discussion of this unfortunate controversy, a waste of space and energy if we did not happen to know that some modern writers like Dr. Sushil Kumar De (*vide* his *Nānā Nibandha*, 1st edition, Calcutta 1954, p. 234) and Brajendranath Banerji (Cf. his *Sambādpātre Sekaler Katha*, Vol I, 3rd edition, pp. 468-71) would still fondly cling to the old charge of Arnot without caring to consider the motive that prompted the latter, his self-contradictions, and the contemporary criticisms of his views. Dr. De seems to have relied mainly on Kishorychand Mitra as far as this is concerned. But the latter it may be pointed out, was not at all well-informed on the subject and gives almost a verbatim reproduction of what has been said at the instigation of Arnot on p. 209 of the original article of the *Asiatic Journal* Vol. XII, New Series (Cf. his article “Rammohun Roy” in the *Calcutta Review* Vol. IV, 1845, p. 362), without taking into consideration or even showing any acquaintance with the elaborate replies of John Hare and Dr. Carpenter. Mr. Banerji once mentions Carpenter but does not give any evidence of having read him and he seems to be unaware of John Hare’s part in the controversy. Under these circumstances therefore, their attempts to revive Arnot’s charges totally fail to convince.<sup>50</sup>

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50. The editors are grateful for the help received from Sj. Amitabha Gupta and Dr. Arabinda Mitra in preparing the present note.



## ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

Pp. 12-13. For Dr. Lant Carpenter's testimony regarding Rammohun's early visit to Tibet, see his *A Review of the Labours Opinions and Character of Rajah Rammohun Roy* London and Bristol, 1833, pp. 101-102 and particularly the footnote on p. 102.

P. 15. Fresh light is shed on Rammohun's stay at Benares by a piece of information kindly forwarded to the editors by Dr. Stephen N. Hay, Assistant Professor of History, University of Chicago, in a letter dated August 3, 1961. A friend of Dr. Hay is said to have turned up the following entry in the *Miscellaneous Revenue Records* of the Benares Commissioner's Office (in the Allahabad Central Record Office) : Banta (?) 100, Vol. 17, p. 20, "Memorandum of Writers' Salary etc. for March, April, May, June and July 1803." Of the nine names and salaries mentioned under this head, one is, "Ram Mohun Roy @ 100=500 Rs." This probably shows that Rammohun was working in Benares in 1803.

P. 39. Mr. Brajendranath Banerji who had held that Rammohun settled permanently in Calcutta from the middle of 1814, finally corrects his mistake in a note added to the latest edition of the *Sāhitya Sādhak Charitmālā*, published by the Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Parishad. (Vol. I, Additions and Corrections, p. 50)

P. 50. For the original account of the strained relations between Rammohun and his mother and of Tarini Devi's ultimate repentance, see Lant Carpenter *A Review of the Labours Opinions and Character of Rajah Rammohun Roy* p. 106 and footnote.

P. 102. The shaping influence of the *Tantrā* philosophy on Rammohun's thought has now been further discussed by S. Dilip Kumar Biswas in his Bengali article "Rammohan Rāyer Dharmamat O Tantra Śāstra" in the *Visvabhārati Patrika* Vol. XVI. No. 4 (Vaisākha-Asadh, 1882 Saka), pp. 225-48.

Pp. 102-104. Two further pieces of evidence in favour of the hypothesis of the authoress that Rammohun had been prevented from becoming one of the Directors of the Hindu College as a result of orthodox Hindu opposition, may be cited :

(1) The following is an extract from a letter published in the *Samāchār Darpan*, October 15, 1831 (Asvin 30, 1238 B. S.), by an orthodox opponent of Rammohun : তাঁহার আচার ব্যবহার হিন্দুর ধারামত নহে ইহাও ব্যক্ত হইল । তৎকালাবধি রামমোহন রায় হিন্দুদের ত্যজ্য হইলেন ইহারো এক প্রমাণ লিখি । অনেকের স্মরণ থাকিবে যে পূর্বের চিফ্ জুষ্টিস সর এড্‌বার্ড হাইড ইষ্ট সাহেব যখন হিন্দু কলেজ স্থাপন করেন তখন নগরস্থ প্রায় সমস্ত ভাগ্যবন্ত লোক উক্ত সাহেবের অহুরোধে এবং দেশের মঙ্গল বোধে অনেক অনেক টাকা চান্দা দিলেন ইহাতে হাইড-ইষ্ট সাহেব তুষ্ট হইয়া কলেজের নিয়ম করিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে এতদেশীয় মহাশয়দের মধ্যে উপযুক্ত পাত্র বিবেচনা করিয়া ঐ পাঠশালার কৰ্ম্মাধ্যক্ষ নিযুক্ত করিলেন তন্মধ্যে রামমোহন রায় গ্রাহ্য হইলেন না যে হেতু তাবৎ হিন্দুর মত নহে ।

দ্বিতীয় প্রমাণ । রামমোহন রায় হিন্দুদের সমাজে গ্রাহ্য হওয়া দূরে থাকুক তাঁহার সহিত সহবাস ছিল এই অপরাধে একজন অতিমান্ত্র লোকের সন্তান বিদ্বান এবং অনেকে ধনদানে বিলক্ষণ সক্ষম তিনিও তৎপদে নিযুক্ত হইতে পারিলেন না তাঁহাকে তৎপদাভিষিক্ত করণাশয়ে সদর দেওয়ানী জজ মেং হেরিংটন সাহেব বিশেষ অহুরোধ করিয়াছিলেন তাহাও রক্ষা হইল না । (Quoted from Brajendranath Banerji's *Samibadpatre Sekāler Kathā* Third Edition, Calcutta, 1356 B. S. Vol. II, p. 481.)



(2) Addressing the first memorial meeting of Rammohun Roy held on the 5th April, 1834, at the Town Hall of Calcutta Rasik Krishna Mallik, one of the most brilliant of the early batch of students of the Hindu College and a prominent member of the group of radical young men known as "Young Bengal" in contemporary circles, said :

"...Not being held in that respect that he should have been by his bigotted countrymen, he was prevented from doing all the good that he would have done. I allude to his not being allowed to join an institution in which he might have been of the greatest service to his country. If he had been admitted his benevolent mind might have suggested many measures which might have done more benefit to the country" (vide his speech as reported in the *Calcutta Monthly Journal* Vol. V, New Series May to August, 1834, p. 258)

It is thus not difficult to see that, the contemporaries of Rammohun knew very well that the intrigues of his orthodox opponents had kept him out of the Managing Committee of the Hindu College. In the first letter a bitter conservative critic of the reformer is found to express malicious delight at the "victory" of the orthodox Hindu clique that succeeded in preventing Rammohun from being associated with the Hindu College. In the second extract one of the most prominent students of contemporary Hindu College is seen to regret the same event deeply.

Pp. 149 (footnote 27), 236 (footnote). The editorial comments made on these pages regarding the date of the final judgment in the cases between Rammohun and the Mahārājā of Burdwan, are apparently wrong. The Mahārāja of Burdwan had instituted three law-suits against Rammohun all of which (Nos. 3004, 3005 and 3006) had been disposed of in the favour of the latter by the Sadar Dewani Adalat. The last case in the series (No. 3006) was decided on November 10, 1831, nearly a year after Rammohun had left India for England. The judgment in the first (No. 3004) had been delivered on November 10, 1830 (the 26th Kartik,

1237 B. S., Aghan 10, 1238 Fasil, Wednesday). The date mentioned in the text is therefore perfectly correct and the editors had been misled by the striking coincidence of the dates of the delivery of the respective judgments of the first and the third suits in the series (i.e. November 10).

P. 189. n. "How completely...was Rammohun vindicated in his advocacy of Western education, along modern lines, will be borne out by the very deserved tribute that was paid to him in the Report of the Education Commission, appointed by Lord Ripon in 1882, which said : 'It took twelve years of controversy, the advocacy of Macaulay, and the decisive action of a new Governor-General, before the Committee could as a body acquiesce in the policy urged by him [Rammohun]'" (*The Father of Modern India : Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume Part II* pp. 45-46).

Pp. 204-05. In connection with Rammohun Roy's labours in the cause of Indian journalism we should remember the following tribute of R. Montgomery Martin : " ..to no individuals is the Indian Press under greater obligations than to the lamented Rammohun Roy and munificent Dwarkanath Tagore." (Cf. his *History of the British Colonies* Vol. I p. 254).

Pp. 206-07. Rammohun's earnest endeavours to secure the liberty of the Press in this country came to be gratefully recognized by his contemporaries after his death. On the occasion of the Free Press Dinner given in honour of Sir Charles T. Metcalf on February 9, 1838, to celebrate the latter's restoration of the freedom of the Indian Press, at the Town Hall, Calcutta, a toast was proposed to the memory of Rammohun Roy for the Raja's great services in the cause of the emancipation of the Press in India, by Mr. J. F. Leith. From the rank of the Indian guests Prasanna Kumar Tagore spoke feelingly on the Rammohun's contributions to the cause of the Liberty of the Press (Cf. "Free Press Dinner" in the



*Calcutta Monthly Journal* Third Series, Vol IV, 1838, Asiatic News, p. 87). Rammohun was again remembered on the occasion of the fourth Free Press Anniversary Dinner held at the Town Hall on December 15, 1838. This time eloquent tributes were paid to him as a champion of civil and religious liberty by the chief Indian guest Dwarakanath Tagore (Cf. *The Calcutta Monthly Journal* No. XLIX, December, 1838, p. 615).

There is an excellent discussion of Rammohun's great work in the cause of journalism and the freedom of the Press in supplementary notes 34 to 39, added by S. J. Amal Home to the brief Sketch of Rammohun's life in the *Rammohun Centenary Publicity Booklet*-No 1 incorporated in *The Father of Modern India : Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume* Part II pp. 47—53.

P. 221. It seems that the real name of the gentleman whose house had originally been rented to hold sessions of the Brahmo Samaj, is Ramkamal Basu. This was first pointed out by S. J. Amal Home (*Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume* Part II p. 39). Recently S. J. Debipada Bhattacharya has come to the same conclusion on the authority of S. J. Harihar Seth of Chandernagore (*Ananda Bazar Patrika*, Sunday, May 22, 1960). This is house No. 48, Upper Chitpore Road, Jorasanko.

P. 221, footnote 5. A few corrections will have to be made in the reference to Moncure Daniel Conway's article. The name of the journal is *The Open Court*, not *Chicago Open Court*. Conway's article entitled "Story of an Old London Society" appeared serially in the said journal in 1893, not in 1894. The excerpt given in *The Father of Modern India* Part II pp. 166-67 is found in *The Open Court* Vol. VIII. No. 4, pp. 377-78, which is dated "Chicago, August 24, 1893." The editors are indebted for these corrections to Dr. Stephen N. Hay who has kindly checked the reference for them. The articles were published in book form as *Centenary History of the South Place Society* by Conway from London in 1894.

In this connection Dr. Hay has also drawn our attention to the following passage from another book of Conway, *My Pilgrimage to the Wise Men of the East* (Boston and New York : Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1906), p. 332 :

“It was in my South Place Chapel that Rammohun Roy was welcome to England by its eloquent minister, W. J. Fox, in 1834 (sic). That was a dawn of the new interest of cultured England in Hindu religion. Mr. Fox was surrounded by the best men and women,—Harriet Martineau, Leigh Hunt, J. S. Mill, Eliza and Sarah Flower (who wrote “Nearer, my God, to Thee !”) and all the leading unitarian Ministers. It was in that homage to the Indian orator who had begun the work of emancipating his countrymen from “idolatry”, as it is called, that the Unitarian Association dropped the title “Christian” and called itself “The British and Foreign Unitarian Association”.

P. 231. The identity of Mr. G. N. Tagore who is said to have given Miss Collet a detailed description of the daily habits of Rammohun, has remained a puzzle till now. One cannot in the present context recall any one with the same initials belonging to the Tagore family of Jorasanko, except perhaps Girindra Nath Tagore, the second son of Dwarakanath Tagore, Rammohun’s trusted friend and collaborator. But Girindra Nath Tagore died in 1854 and would not fit in chronologically. We can also rule out Gaganendra Nath Tagore, the artist, who belongs to the modern generation and would not be expected to possess intimate details of Rammohun’s daily life. Is it possible that the reference is to Jñānendra Mohan Tagore, the son of Rammohun’s close associate, Prasanna Kumar Tagore? Jñānendra Mohan, it should be remembered, embraced Christianity and later in life settled in England. He had good opportunity of establishing contact with Miss Collet and there is just a chance that he might have heard stories of Rammohun’s personal life from his father. His correct initials however would be J. M., not G. N. But the sanskrit word “Jñān” was sometimes popularly transcribed as “Gyan” (Cf. “*Gyan Chandrika*”, p. 27 above.)



So it would not be unnatural to see the first part of the name being written as "Gyānendra" instead of "Jñānendra". The second letter 'N' can be imagined as a possible misprint for "M". All this however is nothing more than pure conjecture.

P. 257. There was a basic difference between the respective attitudes of H. H. Wilson and Rammohun Roy towards the question of the abolition of Suttee. The former believed that the custom of burning widows had the authoritative sanction of the Hindu scriptures and an attempt at abolishing it, would amount to a direct interference on the part of the British Government in an essential religious rite of the Hindus. In his letter of November 25, 1828, to Captain R. Benson he states his position clearly : "They have therefore the weight of commands...and they cannot be directly opposed without violence to the conscientious belief of every order of Hindus." (Cf. J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* No. 75, p. 135). Wilson accordingly was "adverse to any authoritative interference with the practice". (*Ibid* p. 133.) His above letter to Capt. Benson, Military Secretary to Government, contains a definite dig at Rammohun Roy : "One or two individuals who have signalised themselves by dissenting from many of the practises and principles of the religion, may hold a different persuasion, but the vast body of the population will concur in the same impression and the Government has to legislate not for a handful of sectaries but for the Hindus at large." (*Ibid* p. 136). Rammohun however fought all his life for the abolition of the evil custom, published books to show that it was not an essential part of the Hindu religion, roamed about in the cremation grounds to prevent by personal appeal actual cases, risked his honour and even life in the struggle, congratulated the government publicly for promulgating the Regulation of December 4, 1829, which finally abolished the evil practice (Cf. Appendix III) and expressed righteous indignation at English advocates supporting the cause of the anti-abolitionists when the appeal against the abolition of this inhuman rite was finally heard before the Privy Council (Cf. his note of

June 20, 1832, to the Marquis of Lansdowne, p. 346, footnote 22, above). To Bentinck his advice was "that the practice might be suppressed quietly and unobservedly by increasing the difficulties and by the indirect agency of the police," and not by an open enactment. It was clearly an advice on the question of *the ideal strategy to be adopted to secure the ultimate success of the anti-Suttee struggle*. An open enactment in Rammohun's opinion might harm the cause by generating popular resentment on too large a scale. The difference of his outlook from that of Wilson thus is fundamental.

P. 345. Though Rammohun Roy's diplomatic mission from the King of Delhi had partially succeeded and the latter had been granted an increase of pension, Rammohun himself was not satisfied with it and he had written to the Moghul King not to agree to accept the offer of the British Government unless and until his claims were fully satisfied (Cf. "Letter from the Governor General's Agent at Delhi to the Political Secretary to Government, July 18, 1833" in J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and the Last Moghuls*, No. 142, p. 232.) Death however prevented Rammohun from proceeding with his efforts in this matter.

The news of the success of Rammohun's mission had created a sensation in the Native Courts of India and the rage of sending ambassadors to England is said to be on the increase at the time. Besides Baiza Bai the widowed queen of Gwalior others who toyed with the idea of appealing directly to England included the ruler of Oudh, the Nawab Nazim of Murshidabad and the King of Mysore (*Ibid.* p. lviii). It is interesting also to find that after the death of Akbar II his son and successor Bahadur Shah, the last of the Moghuls, followed the tradition by sending Mr. George Thompson as his envoy to Britain in 1843 (*Ibid* pp. lxii-lxiii).

P. 351. Concerning Rammohun Roy's part in gaining advantages for India in the East India Company's Charter of 1833, Rasik Krishna Mallik made the following observations in



course of his speech in the first memorial meeting of the Raja held in the Town Hall of Calcutta on April 5, 1834 :

“He went to England ; to his going there we are in a great measure indebted for the best clauses in the Charter, bad and wretched as the Charter is. Though it contains few provisions for the comfort and happiness of millions that are subject to its sway.....the few provisions that it contains for the good of our countrymen, we owe to Rammohun Roy.” ( Cf. *The Calcutta Monthly Journal* Vol. V., New Series, May to August, 1834, p. 259).

P. 353 n. Regarding Rammohun's plans for getting elected to the Parliament it is important to remember that “Bentham gave much thought to the affairs of India and when Rammohun Roy came to England.....advocated his return to Parliament. Max Müller, Monier Williams, Campbell the poet, and Lord Brougham were others who befriended the prospective candidate...” (*Bengal Past and Present* January to March 1927, p. 74, quoted by Brajendranath Banerji in the *Modern Review* October, 1929, p. 382 n).

P. 356. The censure on Rammohun's sons for having neglected to send their father money in England during the latter's last days is perhaps undeserved. Rammohun's pecuniary difficulties in England were due mainly to the failure of the House of Messrs. Mackintosh & Co., his agents in Calcutta as well as that of Messrs. Rickards, Mackintosh & Co., his agents in England. He had appealed to the Court of Directors for a loan of £2000/- on personal security which he promised to repay within a year in England or within three years in India from the date of its receipt. But the Court of Directors refused to advance the sum on personal security (Cf. Brajendranath Banerji “The Last Days of Rajah Rammohun Roy” *Modern Review* October, 1929, pp. 381-88).

Pp. 364-65. The passage quoted is from Lant Carpenter's *A Review of the Labours Opinions and Character of Rajah Rammohun Roy* (London and Bristol, 1833) pp. 122-23.

# APPENDICES





RAMMOHUN ROY'S  
PETITIONS  
AGAINST THE PRESS REGULATIONS

A. Memorial To The Supreme Court

To The Honourable Sir Francis Magnaghten,

Sole Acting Judge of the Supreme Court of  
Judicature at Fort William in Bengal.

My Lord,

In consequence of the late Rule and Ordinance passed by His Excellency the Governor-General in Council, regarding the Publication of Periodical Works, Your Memorialists consider themselves called upon with due submission, to represent to you their feelings and sentiments on the subject.

Your Memorialists beg leave, in the first place, to bring to the notice of your Lordship, various proofs given by the Natives of this country of their unshaken loyalty to, and unlimited confidence in the British Government of India, which may remove from your mind any apprehension of the Government being brought into hatred and contempt, or the peace, harmony, and good order of society in this country, being liable to be interrupted and destroyed, as implied in the preamble of the above Rule and Ordinance.

First. Your Lordship is well aware, that the Natives of Calcutta and its vicinity, have voluntarily entrusted Government with millions of their wealth, without indicating the least suspicion of its stability and good faith, and reposing in the sanguine hope that their property being so secured, their interests will be as permanent as the British Power itself ;



while on the contrary, their fathers were invariably compelled to conceal their treasures in the bowels of the earth, in order to preserve them from the insatiable rapacity of their oppressive Rulers.

Secondly. Placing entire reliance on the promises made by the British Government at the time of the Perpetual Settlement of the landed property in this part of India, in 1793, the Landholders have since, by constantly improving their estates, been able to increase their produce, in general very considerably ;\* whereas, prior to that period, and under former Governments, their forefathers were obliged to lay waste the greater part of their estates, in order to make them appear of inferior value, that they might not excite the cupidity of Government, and thus cause their rents to be increased or themselves to be dispossessed of their lands,—a pernicious practice which often incapacitated the landholders from discharging even their stipulated revenue to Government, and reduced their families to poverty.

Thirdly. During the last wars which the British Government were obliged to undertake against neighbouring Powers, it is well known, that the great body of Natives, of wealth and respectability, as well as the Landholders of consequence, offered up regular prayers to the objects of their worship for the success of the British arms from a deep conviction that under the sway of that nation, their improvement both mental and social, would be promoted, and their lives, religion, and property be secured. Actuated by such feelings, even in those critical times, which are the best test of the loyalty of the subject, they voluntarily came forward with a large portion of their property to enable the British Government to carry into effect the measures necessary for its own defence, considering the cause of the British as their own, and firmly believing that on its success, their own happiness and prosperity depended.

Fourthly. It is manifest as the light of the day, that the general subjects of observation and the constant and the fami-

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\* Generally, it is said, two or three fold—Reporter.

liar topic of discourse among the Hindu community of Bengal, are the literary and political improvements which are continually going on in the state of the country under the present system of Government, and a comparison between their present auspicious prospects and their hopeless condition under their former Rulers.

Under these circumstances, your Lordship cannot fail to be impressed with a full conviction, that whoever charges the Natives of this country with disloyalty, or insinuates aught to the prejudice of their fidelity and attachment to the British Government, must either be totally ignorant of the affairs of this country and the feelings and sentiments of its inhabitants, as above stated, or, on the contrary, be desirous of misrepresenting the people and misleading the Government, both here and in England, for unworthy purposes of his own.

Your Memorialists must confess, that these feelings of loyalty and attachment, of which the most unequivocal proofs stand on record, have been produced by the wisdom and liberality displayed by the British Government in the means adopted for the gradual improvement of their social and domestic condition, by the establishment of Colleges, Schools and other beneficial institutions in this city, among which the creation of a British Court of Judicature for the more effectual administration of Justice, deserves to be gratefully remembered.

A proof of the Natives of India being more and more attached to the British Rule in proportion as they experience from it the blessings of just and liberal treatment, is, that the Inhabitants of Calcutta, who enjoy in many respects very superior privileges to those of their fellow-subjects in other parts of the country, are known to be in like measure more warmly devoted to the existing Government; nor is it at all wonderful they should in loyalty be not at all inferior to British-born Subjects, since they feel assured of the possession of the same civil and religious liberty, which is enjoyed in England, without being subjected to such heavy taxation as presses upon the people there.

Hence the population of Calcutta, as well as the value of land in this City, have rapidly increased of late years, notwith-



standing the high rents of houses and the dearness of all the necessaries of life compared with other parts of the country, as well as the Inhabitants being subjected to additional taxes, and also liable to the heavy costs necessarily incurred in case of suits before the Supreme Court.

Your Lordship may have learned from the works of the Christian Missionaries, and also from other sources, that ever since the art of printing has become generally known among the Natives of Calcutta, numerous Publications have been circulated in the Bengalee Language, which by introducing free discussion among the Natives and inducing them to reflect and inquire after knowledge, have already served greatly to improve their minds and ameliorate their condition. This desirable object has been chiefly promoted by the establishment of four Native Newspapers, two in the Bengalee and two in the Persian Languages, published for the purpose of communicating to those residing in the interior of the country, accounts of whatever occurs worthy of notice at the Presidency or in the country, and also the interesting and valuable intelligence of what is passing in England and in other parts of the world, conveyed through the English Newspapers or other channels.

Your Memorialists are unable to discover any disturbance of the peace, harmony, and good order of society, that has arisen from the English Press, the influence of which must necessarily be confined to that part of the community who understand the language thoroughly ; but they are quite confident, that the publications in the Native Languages, whether in the shape of a Newspaper or any other work, have none of them been calculated to bring the Government of the country into hatred and contempt, and that they have not proved, as far as can be ascertained by the strictest inquiry, in the slightest degree injurious ; which has very lately been acknowledged in one of the most respectable English Missionary works. So far from obtruding upon Government groundless representations, Native Authors and Editors have always restrained themselves from publishing even such fact respecting the judicial proceedings in the Interior of the country as they thought were likely at first view to be obnoxious to Government.

While your Memorialists were indulging the hope that Government, from a conviction of the manifold advantages of being put in possession of full and impartial information regarding what is passing in all parts of the Country, would encourage the establishment of Newspapers in the cities and districts under the special patronage and protection of Government, that they might furnish the Supreme Authorities in Calcutta with an accurate account of local occurrences and reports of Judicial proceedings,—they have the misfortune to observe, that on the contrary, his Excellency the Governor-General in Council has lately promulgated a Rule and Ordinance imposing severe restraints on the Press and prohibiting all Periodical Publications even at the Presidency and in the Native Languages, unless sanctioned by a License from Government, which is to be revocable at pleasure whenever it shall appear to Government that a publication has contained anything of an unsuitable character.

Those Natives who are in more favourable circumstances and of respectable character, have such an invincible prejudice against making a voluntary affidavit, or undergoing the solemnities of an oath, that they will never think of establishing a publication which can only be supported by a series of oaths and affidavits, abhorrent to their feelings and derogatory to their reputation amongst their countrymen.

After this Rule and Ordinance shall have been carried into execution, your Memorialists are therefore extremely sorry to observe, that a complete stop will be put to the diffusion of knowledge and the consequent mental improvement now going on, either by translations into the popular dialect of this country from the learned languages of the East, or by the circulation of literary intelligence drawn from foreign publications. And the same cause will also prevent those Natives who are better versed in the laws and customs of the British Nation, from communicating to their fellow subjects a knowledge of the admirable system of Government established by the British, and the peculiar excellencies of the means they have adopted for the strict and impartial administration of justice. Another evil of equal importance in the eyes of a



just Ruler, is, that it will also preclude the Natives from making the Government readily acquainted with the errors and injustice that may be committed by its executive officers in the various parts of this extensive country ; and it will also preclude the Natives from communicating frankly and honestly to their Gracious Sovereign in England and his Council, the real condition of his Majesty's faithful subjects in this distant part of his dominions and the treatment they experience from the local Government : since such information cannot in future be conveyed to England, as it has heretofore been, either by the translations from the Native publications inserted in the English Newspapers printed here and sent to Europe, or by the English publications which the Natives themselves had in contemplation to establish, before this Rule and Ordinance was proposed.

After this sudden deprivation of one of the most precious of their rights, which has been freely allowed them since the Establishment of the British Power, a right which they are not, and cannot be charged with having ever abused, the inhabitants of Calcutta would be no longer justified in boasting, that they are fortunately placed by Providence under the protection of the whole British Nation or that the King of England and Lords and Commons are their Legislators, and that they are secured in the enjoyment of the same civil and religious privileges that every Briton is entitled to in England.

Your Memorialists are persuaded that the British Government is not disposed to adopt the political maxim so often acted upon by Asiatic Princes, that the more a people are kept in darkness, their Rulers will derive the greater advantages from them ; since, by reference to History, it is found that this was but a short-sighted policy which did not ultimately answer the purpose of its authors. On the contrary, it rather proved disadvantageous to them ; for we find that as often as an ignorant people, when an opportunity offered, have revolted against their Rulers, all sorts of barbarous excesses and cruelties have been the consequence ; whereas a people naturally disposed to peace and ease, when placed under a good Government from which they experience just and liberal treatment, must become

the more attached to it, in proportion as they become enlightened and the great body of the people are taught to appreciate the value of the blessings they enjoy under its Rule.

Every good Ruler, who is convinced of the imperfection of human nature, and reverences the Eternal Governor of the world, must be conscious of the great liability to error in managing the affairs of a vast empire ; and therefore he will be anxious to afford every individual the readiest means of bringing to his notice whatever may require his interference. To secure this important object, the unrestrained Liberty of Publication, is the only effectual means that can be employed. And should it ever be abused, the established Law of the Land is very properly armed with efficient powers to punish those who may be found guilty of misrepresenting the conduct or character of Government, which are effectually guarded by the same Laws to which individuals must look for protection of their reputation and good name.

Your memorialists conclude by humbly entreating your Lordship to take this Memorial into your gracious consideration ; and that you will be pleased by not registering the above Rule and Ordinance, to permit the Natives of this country to continue in possession of the civil rights and privileges which they and their fathers have so long enjoyed under the auspices of the British nation, whose kindness, and confidence, they are not aware of having done anything, to forfeit.

Chunder Coomar Tagore  
Dwarka Nauth Tagore  
Rammohun Roy  
Hurchunder Ghosh  
Gowree Churn Bonnergee  
Prosunno Coomar Tagore



**B. Appeal to the King in the Council.**

To The King's Most Excellent Majesty

May it please your Majesty,

We, your Majesty's faithful subjects, Natives of India and inhabitants of Calcutta, being placed by Providence under the sovereign care and protection of the august head of the British nation, look up to your Majesty as the guardian of our lives, property, and religion, and when our rights are invaded and our prayers disregarded by the subordinate authorities, we beg leave to carry our complaints before your Majesty's throne which is happily established in mercy and justice, amidst a generous people celebrated throughout the earth as the enemies of tyranny, and distinguished under your royal auspices, as the successful defenders of Europe from Continental usurpation.

2nd. We, your Majesty's faithful subjects, now come before you under the most painful circumstances, the local executive authorities having suddenly assumed the power of legislation in matters of the highest moment, and abolished legal privileges of long standing, without the least pretence that we have ever abused them, and made an invasion on our civil rights such as is unprecedented in the History of British Rule in Bengal, by a measure which either indicates a total disregard of the civil rights and privileges of your Majesty's faithful subjects, or an intention to encourage a cruel and unfounded suspicion of our attachment to the existing Government.

3rd. The greater part of Hindustan having been for several centuries subject to Muhammadan Rule, the civil and religious rights of its original inhabitants were constantly trampled upon, and from the habitual oppression of the conquerors a great body of their subjects in the southern Peninsula (Dukhin), afterwards called Marhattahs, and another body in the western parts now styled Sikhs, were at last driven to revolt; and when the Mussulman power became feeble, they ultimately succeeded in establishing their independence; but the Natives of Bengal wanting vigour of body, and adverse to active exertion, remained during the whole period of the Muhammadan conquest, faithful to the existing Government,

although their property was often plundered, their religion insulted, and their blood wantonly shed. Divine Providence at last, in its abundant mercy, stirred up the English nation to break the yoke of those tyrants, and to receive the oppressed Natives of Bengal under its protection. Having made Calcutta the capital of their dominions, the English distinguished this city by such peculiar marks of favour, as a free people would be expected to bestow, in establishing an English court of Judicature, and granting to all within its jurisdiction, the same civil rights as every Briton enjoys in his native country ; thus putting the Natives of India in possession of such privileges as their forefathers never expected to attain, even under Hindu Rulers. Considering these things and bearing in mind also the solicitude for the welfare of this country, uniformly expressed by the Honourable East India Company, under whose immediate control we are placed, and also by the Supreme Councils of the British nation, your dutiful subjects consequently have not viewed the English as a body of conquerors, but rather as deliverers, and look up to your Majesty not only as a Ruler, but also as a father and protector.

4th. Since the establishment of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Calcutta till the present time, a period that has been distinguished by every variety of circumstances, the country sometimes reposing in the bosom of profound peace, at others shaken with the din of arms—the local Government of Bengal although composed from time to time, of men of every shade of character and opinion, never attempted of its own will and pleasure to take away any of the rights which your Majesty's royal ancestors with the consent of their Councils, had been graciously pleased to confer on your faithful subjects. Under the cheering influence of equitable and indulgent treatment, and stimulated by the example of a people famed for their wisdom and liberality, the Natives of India with the means of amelioration set before them, have been gradually advancing in social and intellectual improvement. In their conduct and in their writings, whether periodical or otherwise, they have never failed to manifest all becoming respect to a Government fraught with such blessing ; of which their own publications and the judgment passed upon them by the works



of their contemporaries, are the best proofs. Your faithful subjects beg leave in support of this statement to submit two extracts from English works very lately published, one by a Native of India, and the other by English Missionaries ; the first is from a work published on the 30th of January last, by Rammohun Roy, entitled "a Final Appeal to the Christian Public", which may serve as a specimen of the sentiments expressed by the Natives of India towards the Government.

"I now conlude my Essay in offering up thanks to the Supreme Disposer of the universe, for having unexpectedly delivered this country, from the long continued tyranny of its former Rulers, and placed it under the Government of the English, a nation who not only are blessed with the enjoyment of civil and political liberty, but also interest themselves, in promoting liberty and social happiness, as well as free inquiry into literary and religious subjects, among those nations to which their influence extends."—pages 378, 379.

5th. The second extract is from a periodical work published at the Danish settlement of Serampore, by a body of English Missionaries, who are known to be generally the best qualified and the most careful observers of the foreign countries in which Europeans have settled. This work, entitled the "Friend of India," treating of the Native Newspapers published in Bengal, thus observes : "How necessary a step this ( the establishment of a Native Press) was for the amelioration of the condition of the Natives, no person can be ignorant who has traced the effects of the Press in other countries. The Natives themselves soon availed themselves of this privilege ; no less than four Weekly Newspapers in the Native language have now been established, and there are hopes, that these efforts will contribute essentially to arouse the Native mind from its long lethargy of death ; and while it excites them to inquire into what is going forward in a world , of which Asia forms so important a portion, urge them to ascertain their own situation respecting that eternal world, which really communicates all the vigour and interest now so visible in Europeans. *Nor has this liberty been abused by them in the least degree ;* yet these vehicles of intelligence have begun to be

called for, from the very extremities of British India, and the talents of the Natives themselves, have not unfrequently been exerted in the production of Essays, that would have done credit to our own countrymen."—(*Friend of India*, Quarterly Series, No. VII, published in December, 1822).

6th. An English gentleman, of the name of Buckingham, who for some years published a Newspaper in this place, entitled the *Calcutta Journal*, having incurred the displeasure of the local Government, was ordered to leave this country and soon afterwards, the Hon'ble John Adam, the Governor-General in Council, suddenly without any previous intimation of his intentions, passed a Rule and Ordinance on the 14th of March, thus taking away the liberty of the press, which your Majesty's faithful subjects had so long and so happily enjoyed, and substituting his own will and pleasure for the Laws of England, by which it had hitherto been governed. (This Rule, Ordinance, and Regulation is annexed : *vide* Paper annexed No. 1.)\*

7th. It being necessary according to the system established for the Government of this country that the above Regulation should receive the approbation of the Supreme Court by being registered there, after having been fixed up for 20 days on the walls of the Court-room, before it could become Law on the following Monday, (the 17th of March,) Mr. Fergusson, Barrister, moved the Court to allow parties who might feel themselves aggrieved by the New Regulation, to be heard against it by their Counsel before the sanction of the Court should establish it as Law, and the Honourable Sir Francis Macnaghten, the sole acting Judge, expressed his willingness to hear in this manner, all that could be urged against it, and appointed Monday the 31st of the same month of March, for Counsel to be heard. His Lordship also kindly suggested that in the meantime, he thought it would be advisable to present a Memorial to Government, praying for the withdrawal of the said Rule and Ordinance. These observations from the Honourable Sir Francis Macnaghten, inspired your Majesty's

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\* These annexed papers have not been printed as unnecessary.—*Editors*.



faithful subjects at this Presidency, with a confident hope that his Lordship disapproved of the Rule and Ordinance, and would use his influence with Government to second the prayer of the Memorial he recommended to be presented, or that at least in virtue of the authority vested in him for the purpose of protecting your faithful subjects against illegal and oppressive acts, he would prevent the proposed Rule from passing into Law.

8th. Your faithful subjects agreeable to a suggestion of this nature, proceeding from such a source, employed the few days intervening, in preparing a Memorial to Government, containing a respectful representation of the reasons which existed against the proposed Rule and Ordinance being passed into Law ; but in preparing this Memorial in both the English and Bengalee Languages, and discussing the alterations suggested by the different individuals who wished to give it their support and signature, so much time was necessarily consumed, that it was not ready to be sent into circulation for signature until the 30th March ; consequently only fifteen Natives of respectability had time to read it over and affix their signature before the following day on which it was to be discussed in the Supreme Court and finally sanctioned or rejected. Besides that this number was considered insufficient, it was then too late for Government to act upon this Memorial so as to supersede the discussions and decision that were to take place in the Court, and a few individuals, therefore, of those who concurred in it, hastily prepared another Memorial of the same tenor in the morning of that day, addressed to the Supreme Court itself, demonstrating our unshaken attachment to the British Government, and praying the Court to withhold its sanction from a Regulation which would deprive us of an invaluable privilege, firmly secured to us by the Laws of the Land, which we had so long enjoyed and could not be charged with ever having abused. (Annexed paper No. 2.) And although from these circumstances, the Memorial had still fewer signatures, your Majesty's faithful subjects reposed in the hope, that in appealing to a British Court of Law they might rely more on the justice of their cause, than the number or weight of names,

especially, since it is wellknown, that there are many under the immediate influence of Government, who would not express an opinion against the acts of those in power at the time, although it were to secure the salvation of all their countrymen.

9th. This Memorial being, by the order of the Judge, read by the Registrar of the Court, Mr. Fergusson, (who besides his professional skill and eminence as an English Lawyer, has acquired by his long practice at the Calcutta Bar, a very intimate acquaintance with the state of this Country) in virtue of the permission granted him, entered into an argument, shewing the Rule and Ordinance to be both illegal and inexpedient. (The grounds on which he opposed it are given at length, annexed paper No. 3.)

10th. These and other conclusive arguments urged by Mr. Fergusson, and also by Mr. Turton, both eminently skilled in the the Laws of England, powerfully strengthened the hopes previously created by the observations that formerly fell from the Bench, that the learned Judge would enter his protest against such a direct violation of the Laws, and uncalled for invasion of the rights of your faithful subjects.

11th. Notwithstanding, we observed with astonishment and regret, that his Lordship, in giving his decision, paid no regard whatever to the above Memorial, not alluding to it in the most distant manner, not to the argument it contained ; and his Lordship further disclosed, that at the time he expressed a desire to hear every objection that could be urged, and recommended a Memorial to Government against it, from which your faithful subjects unanimously hoped that the mind of the Judge was undecided, and rather unfavourable to the Rule, his Lordship had previously pledged himself by promise to Government to give it his sanction. (Annexed paper No. 4, containing the speech made by Sir Francis Macnaghten the the Judge, who presided on the occasion.)

12th. Your Majesty's faithful subjects cannot account for the inconsistency manifested by Sir F. Macnaghten in two different points with regard to the sanctioning of this Regulation. In the first place, according to his Lordship's own



statement from the Bench, he refused not only once, but twice, to see the Regulation before it passed in Council, probably because his Lordship thought it improper for him to give it his approbation until it came before him in the regular manner ; but he afterwards, when application was made to him a third time, not only consented to read it, but with some alterations agreed to give it his sanction, a change of conduct for which no reason was assigned by his Lordship. Again when application was made to his Lordship to hear the objections that might be urged against it, before giving it his Judicial approval, his Lordship withheld from the knowledge of the public, not only that he had already so pledged himself ; but even that he had previously seen the Regulation, and expressed himself ready to hear all that could be said respecting it, in the same manner as if his mind had been unfettered by any promise, and perfectly open to conviction. Consequently, some of your Majesty's faithful subjects prepared a Memorial and retained Counsel against the new Regulation, and had afterwards the mortification to find, that their representations were treated with contemptuous neglect, and that the arguments of the most able Lawyers would be of no avail.

13th. Your Majesty in Parliament has been graciously pleased to make it a part of the Law of this Country, that after a Regulation has passed the Council, it must be fixed up for twenty days in the Supreme Court, before it can be registered, so as to receive the full force of Law, an interval which allows the Judge time for deliberation and to hear from others all the objections that may exist to the proposed measure, and might have the effect of preventing the establishment of injudicious and inexpedient or unjust and oppressive acts ; but if, as in this case, the Judges enter into previous compact with the Local Government, and thus preclude the possibility of any effectual representation from your faithful subjects, who have no intimation of what is meditated till it be finally resolved upon, the salutary effect of twenty day's delay is lost, and your faithful subjects will be in constant apprehension, that the most valuable and sacred of their rights may, as in this

instance, be suddenly snatched from them at a moment's warning, before they know that such a measure is in contemplation, or have time to represent the evils which it is calculated to inflict upon them.

14th. In pursuance of the Regulation passed as above described, the Government issued an official order in the "Government Gazette" of the 5th of April, commanding the attention of Editors of Newspapers, or other periodical works, to certain restrictions therein contained, prohibiting all matters which it might consider as coming under the following heads :

(1st). Defamatory or contumelious reflections against the King, or any of the Members of the Royal Family.

(2nd). Obseervations or statements touching the character, constitution, measures or orders of the Court of Directors, or other public authorities in England, connected with the Government of India, or the character, constitution, measures, or orders of the Indian Governments, impugning the motives and designs of such authorities of Governments, or in any way tending to bring them into hatred or contempt, to excite resistance to their orders, and to weaken their authority.

(3rd.) Observations or statements of the above description, relative to allied, or Friendly Native Powers, their Ministers, or Representatives.

(4th.) Defamatory or contumelious remarks or offensive insinuations levelled against the Governor-General, the Governors or Commanders-in-Chief, the Members of Council or the Judges of His Majesty's Courts at any of the Presidencies, or the Bishop of Calcutta, and publications of any description, tending to expose them to hatred, obloquy or contempt, also libellous or abusive reflections and insinuations against the Public Officers of Government.

(5th.) Discussions having a tendency to create alarm or suspicion among the native population of any intended official interference with their religious opinions and observances, and irritating and insulting remarks on their peculiar usages and modes of thinking on religious subjects.



(6th.) The republication from English, or other papers, of passages coming under the foregoing heads.

(7th.) Defamatory publications tending to disturb the peace, harmony, and good order of society.

(8th.) Anonymous appeals to the Public, relative to grievances of professional or official nature alleged to have been sustained by public officers in the service of His Majesty or the Honourable Company.

This Copy of the Restrictions will be authenticated by the annexed Copy (No. 5).

15th. The above Restrictions, as they are capable of being interpreted, will in fact afford Government and all its Functionaries from the highest to the lowest, complete immunity from censure or exposure respecting anything done by them in their official capacity, however desirable it might be for the interest of the Country, and also that of this Honourable Company, that the public conduct of such public men should not be allowed to pass unnoticed. It can scarcely be doubted that the real object of these Restrictions is, to afford all the Functionaries of Government complete security against their conduct being made the subject of observation, though it is associated with a number of other restraints totally uncalled for, but well calculated to soothe the supreme authorities in England and win their assent to the main object of the Rule—the suppression of public remark on the conduct of the public officers of Government in India.

16th. Your Majesty's faithful subjects could have surely no inducement in this distant quarter of the world to make contumelious and injurious reflections on your Majesty or any of the members of your Majesty's illustrious family, or to circulate them among people to whom your Majesty's name is scarcely known, and to the greatest part of whom, even the fame of your greatness and power has not reached ; but to those few Natives who are possessed of sufficient information to understand the political situation of England, the English Newspapers and Books which are constantly brought to this country in great abundance, are equally intelligible with the periodical publications printed in Calcutta.

17th. Neither can your Majesty's faithful subjects have any wish to make remarks on the proceedings of the Court of Directors, of whose beneficent intentions they are well convinced, but that the Honourable Body who have so often manifested their earnest desire to ameliorate the condition of their Indian dependants, must be naturally anxious to be made exactly acquainted with the manner in which their wishes are carried into execution, and the operation and effect of the acts passed relative to this country.

18th. Whoever shall maliciously publish what has a tendency to bring the Government into hatred and contempt, or excite resistance to its orders, or weaken their authority, may be punished by Law as guilty of treason or sedition ; and surely in a country enjoying profound peace externally and internally, and where seditious and treasonable publications are unknown, it could not be necessary for Government to throw aside of a sudden, the Laws which for anything that has appeared, were fully sufficient, and arm itself with new and extraordinary powers at a time when that Government is more secure than at any former period.

19th. It may surely be left for British Judges and Juries to determine whether the mention made of the proceedings of Government, be malevolent, seditious and dangerous to the State, so as to render a writer or publisher culpable and amenable to punishment ; but if the mere mention of the conduct of Government without misrepresentation or malice on the part of the writer, bring it into hatred and contempt, such conduct will never receive the countenance or protection of your Majesty by the sanction of a Law to prevent its exposure to public observation, and the discovery of that dissatisfaction it may have occasioned, which would afford the higher authorities an opportunity of removing them.

20th. After a body of English Missionaries have been labouring for about twenty-five years by preaching and distributing publications in the native languages in all parts of Bengal, to bring the prevailing system of religion into disrepute, no alarm whatever prevails, because your Majesty's faithful subjects possess the power of defending their



Religion by the same means that are employed against it, and many of them have exercised the freedom of the Press to combat the writings of English missionaries, and think no other protection necessary to the maintenance of their faith. While the Teachers of Christianity use only reason and persuasion to propagate their Religion, your Majesty's faithful subjects are content to defend theirs by the same weapons, convinced that true Religion needs not the aid of the sword or of legal penalties for its protection. While your Majesty's faithful subjects perceived that Government shewed no displeasure, and claimed no arbitrary power of preventing the publication of what was written in defence of the prevailing religion of the country, it was impossible to entertain any such suspicion as that intimated in the 5th article, *viz.*, that Government would interfere with the established faith of the natives of this country. Nevertheless, if any person with a malicious and seditious design were to circulate an unfounded rumour that Government meant so to interfere with our religious privileges, he would be severely punished by law : but if the Government really intended to adopt measures to change the religion of the country, your Majesty's faithful subjects would be absolutely prohibited by the present Restrictions from intimating the appalling intelligence to their countrymen : and although they have every reason to hope that the English nation will never abandon that religious toleration which has distinguished their progress in the East, it is impossible to foresee to what purpose of religious oppression such Law might at some future time be applied.

21st. The office of the Lord Bishop of Calcutta not calling him to preach Christianity in that part of the town inhabited by the natives, or to circulate Pamphlets among them against the established Religion of the Country, but being of a nature totally distinct, and not at all interfering with the religious opinion of the native population, they could never dream of vilifying and defaming his character or office.

22nd. The Judges of the Supreme Court in Calcutta and of the English Courts of Judicature at the other Presidencies, enjoy, in virtue of their office, the power of protecting their

characters and official conduct from defamation and abuse since such would be either a contempt of the Court, liable to summary punishment, or punishable by those Laws enacted against libel. It is therefore hard to be conceived, that they stand in need of still further protection, unless it should be wished thereby to create an idea of their infallibility, which however is incompatible with the freedom allowed to Barristers, of delivering their sentiments beforehand on the justice or injustice of the opinions the Judges may pronounce, and in case of appeal, of controverting the justice and equity of their decision. The only object such a restriction is calculated to attain, must therefore be defeated, unless it be meant thereby to prevent the publication of the pleadings which as they take place in an English Court of Judicature are by Law public, and ought to be accessible to all.

23rd. The seventh restriction prohibiting defamatory publications tending to disturb the peace, harmony, and good order of Society, is equally unnecessary, since the British Legislature has already provided a punishment for such offences by the Laws enacted against libel.

24th. Your Majesty's faithful subjects will not offer any more particular remarks on the superfluous Restrictions introduced to accompany those more important ones which are the principal object of Government, and will conclude with this general observation, that they are unnecessary, either because the offences prohibited are imaginary and improbable, or because they are already provided for by the Laws of the Land and either the Government does not intend to put them in force at all, or it is anxious to interrupt the regular course of justice, abolish the right of Trial by Jury and, by taking the Law into its own hands, to combine the Legislative and Judicial power, which is destructive of all Civil Liberty.

25th. Your Majesty's faithful subjects have heard that, Your Majesty constantly submits to the greatest freedom of remark among your British-born subjects without losing any part of the homage and respect due to your exalted character and station, and that the conduct of your Ministers is constantly the topic of discussion, without destroying the dignity and power of the Government. While such is the case in a



country where it is said above nine-tenths of the Inhabitants read newspapers, and are therefore liable to be led by the opinions circulated through the press, its capability of bringing a Government into hatred and contempt must be far less in a country where the great mass of the population do not read at all, and have the greatest reverence for men in power, of whom they can only judge by what they feel, and are not to be moved by what is written, but by what is done, where consequently Government can only be brought into hatred and contempt by its own acts.

26th. The Marquis of Hastings, who had associated for the greater part of his life, with Kings and Princes, entertained no apprehension that the salutary control of public scrutiny which he commended, would bring him or his Indian administration into hatred and contempt; and in effect, instead of such being the result, the greater the freedom he allowed to the European conductors of the Press, only rendered his name the most honoured and revered in this part of the world, because it was universally believed, that his conduct proceeded from a consciousness of rectitude which feared no investigation.

27th. But your faithful subjects might forbear urging further arguments on this subject to Your Majesty, who with your actions open to observation, possess the love, the esteem, and the respect of mankind, in a degree which none of the despotic Monarchs of Europe or Asia can ever attain, whose subjects are prohibited from examining and expressing their opinions regarding their conduct.

28th. Asia unfortunately affords few instances of Princes who have submitted their actions to the judgment of their subjects, but those who have done so, instead of falling into hatred and contempt, were the more loved and respected, while they lived, and their memory is still cherished by posterity; whereas more despotic Monarchs, pursued by hatred in their life time, could with difficulty escape the attempts of the rebel or the assassin, and their names are either detested or forgotten.

29th. The idea of the possession of absolute power and perfection, is evidently not necessary to the stability of the British Government of India, since Your Majesty's faithful subjects are accustomed to see private individuals citing the

Government before the Supreme Court, where the justice of their acts is fearlessly impugned, and after the necessary evidence being produced and due investigation made, judgment not unfrequently given against the Government, the judge not feeling himself restrained from passing just sentence by any fear of the Government being thereby brought into contempt. And your Majesty's faithful subjects only pray, that it may be permitted by means of the Press or by some other means equally effectual, to bring forward evidence regarding the acts of Government which affect the general interest of the community, that they also may be investigated and reversed, when those who have the power of doing so, become convinced that they are improper or injurious.

30th. A Government conscious of rectitude of intention, cannot be afraid of public scrutiny by means of the Press, since this instrument can be equally well employed as a weapon of defence, and a Government possessed of immense patronage, is more especially secure, since the greater part of the learning and talent in the country being already enlisted in the service, its actions, if they have any shadow of Justice, are sure of being ably and successfully defended.

31st. Men in power hostile to the Liberty of the Press, which is a disagreeable check upon their conduct, when unable to discover any real evil arising from its existence, have attempted to make the world imagine, that it might, in some possible contingency, afford the means of combination against the Government, but not to mention that extraordinary emergencies would warrant measures which in ordinary times are totally unjustifiable, your Majesty is well aware, that a Free Press has never yet caused a revolution in any part of the world because, while men can easily represent the grievances arising from the conduct of the local authorities to the supreme Government, and thus get them redressed, the grounds of discontent that excite revolution are removed; whereas, where no freedom of the Press existed, and grievances consequently remained unrepresented and unredressed, innumerable revolutions have taken place in all parts of the globe, or if prevented by the armed force of the Government, the people continued ready for insurrection.



32nd. The servants of the Honourable Company are necessarily firmly attached to that system from which they derive their consequence and power, and on which their hopes of higher honours and still greater emoluments depend ; and if it be possible to imagine, that these strong considerations are not sufficient to preserve subordination among them, the power of suspension and ruin which hangs over their heads for any deviation from duty. is certainly sufficient to secure that object.

33rd. After the British Government has existed for so many years, it has acquired a certain standard character in the minds of the natives of India, from the many excellent men who have from time to time held the reins of power, and the principles by which they have been guided. Whatever opinion therefore, may be entertained of the individuals composing it at a particular period, while the source of power remains the same, your Majesty's faithful subjects cannot of a sudden lose confidence in the virtue of the stream, since although it may for a period be tainted with corruption, yet in the natural course of events it must soon resume its accustomed character. Should individuals abuse the power entrusted to them, public resentment cannot be transferred from the delinquents to the Government itself, while there is a prospect of remedy from the higher authorities ; and should the highest in this country turn a deaf ear to all complaint, by forbidding grievances to be even mentioned, the spirit of loyalty is still kept alive by the hope of redress from the authorities in England ; thus the attachment of the Natives of India, to the British Government must be as permanent as their confidence in the honour and Justice of the British nation, which is their last Court of Appeal next to Heaven. But if they be prevented from making their real condition known in England, deprived of this hope of redress, they will consider the most peculiar excellence of the British Government of India, as done away.

34th. If these conclusions drawn from the particular circumstances of this country, be met with such an argument as that a colony or distant dependency can never safely be entrusted with the Liberty of the Press, and that therefore Natives of Bengal cannot be allowed to exercise the privileges they have so long enjoyed, this would be in other words to tell

them, that they are condemned to perpetual oppression and degradation, from which they can have no hope of being raised during the existence of the British Power,

35th. The British nation has never yet descended to avow a principle so foreign to their character, and if they could for a moment entertain the idea of preserving their power by keeping their colonies in ignorance, the prohibition of periodical publications is not enough, but printing of all kinds, education, and every other means of diffusing knowledge should be equally discouraged and put down. For it must be the distant consequences of the diffusion of knowledge that are dreaded by those (if there be any such) who are really apprehensive for the stability of Government, since it is well known to all in the least acquainted with this country, that although every effort were made by periodical as well as other publications, a great number of years must elapse before any considerable change can be made in the existing habits and opinions of the Natives of India, so firmly are they wedded to established custom. Should apprehensions so unworthy of the English nation prevail, then unlike the ancient Romans who extended their knowledge and civilization with their conquests, ignorance and degradation must mark the extent of British Power. Yet surely even this affords no hope of perpetual rule, since notwithstanding the tyranny and oppression of Gengis Khan and Tamerlane, their empire was not so lasting as that of the Romans, who to the proud title of conquerors, added the more glorious one of Enlighteners of the World. And of the two most renowned and powerful monarchs among the Moghuls, Akbar was celebrated for his clemency, for his encouragement of learning, and for granting civil and religious liberty to his subjects, and Aurungzebe, for his cruelty and intolerance, yet the former reigned happy, extended his power and his dominions, and his memory is still adored, whereas the other, though endowed with equal abilities and possessed of equal power and enterprize, met with many reverses and misfortunes during his lifetime, and his name is now held in abhorrence.

36th. It is well known that despotic Governments naturally desire the suppression of any freedom of expression which might tend to expose their acts to the obloquy which ever



attends the exercise of tyranny or oppression, and the argument they constantly resort to, is, that the spread of knowledge is dangerous to the existence of all legitimate authority, since, as a people become enlightened, they will discover that by a unity of effort, the many may easily shake off the yoke of the few, and thus become emancipated from the restraints of power altogether, forgetting the lesson derived from history, that in countries which have made the smallest advance in civilization, anarchy and revolution are most prevalent—while on the other hand, in nations the most enlightened, any revolt against governments which have guarded inviolate the rights of the governed, is most rare, and that the resistance of a people advanced in knowledge, has ever been—not against the existence,—but against the abuses of the Governing power. Canada, during the late war with America, afforded a memorable instance of the truth of this argument. The enlightened inhabitants of that colony, finding that their rights and privileges had been secured to them, their complaints listened to, and their grievances redressed by the British government, resisted every attempt of the United States to seduce them from their allegiance to it. In fact, it may be fearlessly averred, that the more enlightened a people become, the less likely are they to revolt against the governing power, as long as it is exercised with justice tempered with mercy, and the rights and privileges of the governed are held sacred from any invasion.

37th. If your Majesty's faithful subjects could conceive for a moment, that the British nation actuated solely by interested policy, considered India merely as a valuable property, and would regard nothing but the best means of securing its possession and turning it to advantage, even then it would be of importance to ascertain whether this property be well taken care of by their servants on the same principle that good masters are not indifferent about the treatment of their slaves.

38th. While therefore the existence of a free Press is equally necessary for the sake of the Governors and the governed, it is possible a national feeling may lead the British people to suppose, that in two points, the peculiar situation of this country requires a modification of the laws enacted

for the control of the Press in England. First, that for the sake of greater security and to preserve the union existing between England and this country, it might be necessary to enact a penalty to be inflicted on such persons as might endeavour to excite hatred in the minds of the Natives of India against the English nation. Secondly, that a penalty should be inflicted on such as might seditiously attempt to excite hostilities with neighbouring or friendly states. Although your Majesty's faithful subjects are not aware that anything has yet occurred to call for the precautions thus anticipated, yet should such or any other limitations of the liberty of the Press be deemed necessary, they are perfectly willing to submit to additional penalties to be legally inflicted. But they must humbly enter their protest against the injustice of robbing them of their long standing privileges, by the introduction of numerous arbitrary restrictions, totally uncalled for by the circumstances of the country—and whatever may be their intention, calculated to suppress truth, protect abuses—and encourage oppression.

39th. Your Majesty's faithful subjects now beg leave to call your Majesty's attention to some peculiarly injurious consequences of the new laws that have thus been suddenly introduced in the manner above described. First, the above Rule and Ordinance has deprived your Majesty's faithful so many years subjects of the liberty of the Press, which they had enjoyed for since the establishment of the British Rule. Secondly, your Majesty's faithful subjects are deprived of the protection of your Majesty and the high council of the British nation, who have hitherto exclusively exercised the legislative power in this part of your Majesty's dominions.

40th. If upon representations being made by the local authorities in the country, your Majesty after due investigation had been pleased with the advice of the high council of the realm to order the abolition of the liberty of the Press in India, your Majesty's faithful subjects from the feeling of respect and loyalty due to the supreme legislative power, would have patiently submitted, since although they would in that case, still have lost one of their most precious privileges, yet their claim to the superintendence and protection of the highest



legislative authority, in whom your faithful subjects have unbounded confidence, would still have remained unshaken ; but were this Rule and Ordinance of the local Government to be held valid, and thus remain as a precedent for similar proceedings in future, your faithful subjects would find their hope of protection from the Supreme Government, cut off, and all their civil and religious rights placed entirely at the mercy of such individuals as may be sent from England to assume the executive authority in this country, or rise into power through the routine of office, and who from long officiating in an inferior station, may have contracted prejudices against individuals or classes of men, which ought not to find shelter in the breast of the Legislator.

41st. As it never has been imagined, or surmised in this country, that the Government was in any immediate danger from the operation of the native Press, it cannot be pretended that the public safety required strong measures to be instantly adopted, and that consequently there was not sufficient time to make a representation to the authorities in England, and wait for their decision, or that it was incumbent on the highest Judicial authority in India, to sanction an act so repugnant to the laws of England, which he has sworn to maintain inviolate.

42nd. If as your Majesty's faithful subjects have been informed, this Government were dissatisfied with the conduct of the English newspaper, called the "Calcutta Journal," the banishment of the Editor of that paper, and the power of punishing those left by him to manage his concern, should they also give offence, might have satisfied the Government ; but at any rate your Majesty's faithful subjects, who are natives of this country, against whom there is not the shadow of a charge, are at a loss to understand the nature of that justice which punishes them, for the fault imputed to others. Yet notwithstanding what the local authorities of this country have done, your faithful subjects feel confident, that your Majesty will not suffer it to be believed throughout your Indian territories, that it is British justice to punish millions for the fault imputed to one individual.

43rd. The abolition of this most precious of their privileges, is the more appalling to your Majesty's faithful subjects

because it is a violent infringement of their civil and religious rights, which under the British Government, they hoped would be always secure. Your Majesty is aware, that under their former Muhammadan Rulers, the natives of this country enjoyed every political privilege in common with Mussulmans, being eligible to the highest offices in the state, entrusted with the command of armies and the government of provinces and often chosen as advisers to their Prince, without disqualification or degrading distinction on account of their religion or the place of their birth. They used to receive free grants of land exempted from any payments of revenue, and besides the highest salaries allowed under the Government, they enjoyed free of charge, large tracts of country attached to certain offices of trust and dignity, while natives of learning and talent were rewarded with numerous situations of honour and emolument. Although under the British Rule, the natives of India, have entirely lost this political consequence, your Majesty's faithful subjects were consoled by the more secure enjoyment of those civil and religious rights which had been so often violated by the rapacity and intolerance of the Mussalmans ; and notwithstanding the loss of political rank and power, they considered themselves much happier in the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty than were their ancestors ; but if these rights that remain are allowed to be unceremoniously invaded, the most valuable of them being placed at the mercy of one or two individuals, the basis on which they have founded their hopes of comfort and happiness under the British Power, will be destroyed.

44th. Your Majesty has been pleased to place this part of your dominions under the immediate control of the Court of Directors, and this Honourable Body have committed the entire management of this country (Calcutta excepted) to a number of gentlemen styled Civil Servants, usually under the superintendence of a Governor-General. These gentlemen who are entrusted with the whole administration, consist of three classes ; First subordinate local officers, such as Judges of Districts, Magistrates, Collectors and commercial agents ; secondly officers superior to them as Judges of Circuit, and Members of



different Revenue and Commercial Boards, &c. Thirdly, those who fill the highest and most important offices, as Judges of the Sudder Dewany Adalut, Secretaries to Government, the Members of the Supreme Council, and sometimes a Civil Servant may rise to the highest office, of Governor General of India. In former times, native fathers were anxious to educate their children according to the usages of those days, in order to qualify them for such offices under government as they might reasonably hope to obtain ; and young men had the most powerful motives for sedulously cultivating their minds, in the laudable ambition of rising by their merits to an honourable rank in society ; whereas under the present system, so trifling are the rewards held out to native talent, that hardly any stimulus to intellectual improvement remains ; yet, your Majesty's faithful subjects felt confident, that notwithstanding these unfavourable circumstances, the natives of India would not sink into absolute mental lethargy while allowed to aspire to distinction in the world of letters, and to exercise the liberty of the Press for their moral and intellectual improvement, which are far more valuable than the acquisition of riches or any other temporal advantages under arbitrary power.

45th. Those gentlemen propose and enact laws for the Government of the extensive territory under their control, and also administer these laws ; collect revenue of all sorts, and superintend manufactories carried on in behalf of the state ; and they have introduced according to their judgment, certain judicial, commercial, and revenue systems to which it may be supposed they are partial, as being their own, and therefore support them with their whole influence and abilities as of the most efficient and salutary character. It is also the established custom of these gentlemen to transmit official reports from time to time , to the Court of Directors, to make them acquainted with the mode in which the country is governed, and the happiness enjoyed by the people of this vast empire, from the manner in which the laws are administered.

46th Granting that those gentlemen were almost infallible in their judgment and their systems nearly perfect ; yet your Majesty's faithful subjects may be allowed to presume,

that the paternal anxiety which the Court of Directors have often expressed for the welfare of the many millions dependent upon them in a country situated at the distance of several thousand miles, would suggest to them the propriety of establishing some other means besides, to ascertain whether the system introduced in their Indian possessions, prove so beneficial to the natives of this country, as their authors might fondly suppose or would have others believe, and whether the Rules and Regulations which may appear excellent in their eyes, are strictly put in practice

47th. Your Majesty's faithful subjects are aware of no means by which impartial information on these subjects can be obtained by the Court of Directors or other authorities in England, except in one of the two following modes : either, first, by the existence of a Free Press in this country and the Establishment of Newspaper in the different Districts under the special patronage of the Court of Directors and subject to the control of law only, or secondly by the appointment of a commission composed of gentlemen of intelligence and respectability, totally unconnected with the Governing Body in this country, which may from time to time, investigate on the spot, the condition of your Majesty's faithful subjects, and judge with their own eyes regarding the operation of the systems of law and jurisprudence under which they live.

48th. But the immense labour required for surveying a country of such extent, and the great expense that would be necessary to induce men of such reputation and ability as manifestly to qualify them for the important task, to undertake a work of such difficulty, which must be frequently repeated, present great, if not insuperable obstacles to the introduction or efficacy of the latter mode of proceeding by commission ; from which your Majesty's faithful subjects therefore, do not entertain any sanguine expectations ; unless your Majesty influenced by human considerations for the welfare of your subjects, were graciously pleased to enjoin its adoption from a conviction of its expediency whatever might be the expense attending it.

49th. The publication of truth and the natural expression of men's sentiments through the medium of the Press,



entail no burden on the State, & should it appear to your Majesty and the enlightened men placed about your throne, that this precious privilege which is so essential to the well-being of your faithful subjects, could not safely be entrusted to the Natives of India, although they have given such unquestionable proofs of their loyalty and attachment, subject only to the restraints wisely imposed upon the Press by the laws of England, your faithful subjects entreat on behalf of their countrymen, that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to grant it, subject to such severer restraints and heavier penalties as may be deemed necessary ; but legal restraints, not those of arbitrary power—and penalties to be inflicted after trial and conviction according to the forms of the Laws of England,—not at the will and pleasure of one or two individuals without investigation or without hearing any defence or going through any of the forms prescribed by law, to ensure the equitable administration of justice.

50th. Notwithstanding the despotic power of the Mogul Princes who formerly ruled over this country, and that their conduct was often cruel and arbitrary, yet the wise and virtuous among them, always employed two intelligencers at the residence of their Nawabs or Lord Lieutenants, *Akhbar-navees*, or news-writer who published an account of whatever happened, and a *Khoofea-navees*, or confidential correspondent, who sent a private and particular account of every occurrence worthy of notice ; and although these Lord Lieutenants were often particular friends or near relations to the Prince, he did not trust entirely to themselves for a faithful and impartial report of their administration, and degraded them when they appeared to deserve it, either for their own faults or for their negligence in not checking the delinquencies of their subordinate officers ; which shews that even the Mogul Princes, although their form of Government admitted of nothing better, were convinced, that in a country so rich and so replete with temptations, a restraint of some kind was absolutely necessary, to prevent the abuses that are so liable to flow from the possession of power.

51st. The country still abounds in wealth, and its inhabitants are still addicted to the same corrupt means of compas-

sing their ends, to which from having long lived under arbitrary Government, they have become naturally habituated ; and if its present Rulers have brought with them purer principles from the land of their birth which may better withstand the influence of long residence amid the numerous temptations to which they are exposed ;—on the other hand, from the seat of the Supreme Government being placed at an immense distance and the channel of communication entirely in their own hands, they are left more at liberty to follow their own interests, and looking forward to the quiet and secure enjoyment of their wealth in their native land, they may care little for the character they leave behind them in a remote country, among a people for whose opinion they have no regard. Your Majesty's faithful subjects, therefore, humbly presume, that the existence of a restraint of some kind, is absolutely necessary to preserve your faithful subjects from the abuses of uncontrolled power.

52nd. That your Majesty may be convinced, that your faithful subjects do not allude merely to possible abuses, or point out only theoretical defects in established systems, they beg leave to call your Majesty's attention to the observations contained in a number of a most respectable Baptist Missionary work, the accuracy of which, although it has now been two years \* in circulation, in all parts of India, not one of the numerous civil servants of the Honourable Company, has ventured to dispute, nor have the flagrant abuses it points out, been remedied.

53rd. It might be urged on the other hand, that persons who feel aggrieved, may transmit representations of the Court of Directors, and thus obtain redress ; but the natives of this country are generally ignorant of this mode of proceeding ; and with neither friends in England nor knowledge of the country, they could entertain no hope of success, since they know that the transmission of their representations, depends in point of time, upon the pleasure of the local Government, which will probably, in order to counteract their influence, accompany

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\*No. IV. Quarterly series of the Friend of India, published in December, 1821.



them with observations, the nature of which would be totally unknown to the complainants,—discouragements which in fact have operated as complete preventives, so that no instance of such a representation from the Natives of Bengal, has ever been known.

54th. In conclusion, your Majesty's faithful subjects humbly beseech your Majesty, first, to cause the Rule and Ordinance and Regulation before mentioned, which has been registered by the Judge of your Majesty's Court, to be rescinded ; and prohibit any authority in this country, from assuming the legislative power, or prerogatives of your Majesty and the High Council of the Realm, to narrow the privileges and destroy the rights of your Majesty's faithful subjects, who claim your protection, and are willing to submit to such laws, as your Majesty with the advice of your Council, shall be graciously pleased to enact.

Secondly, your Majesty's faithful subjects humbly pray, that your Majesty will be pleased to confirm to them the privilege, they have so long enjoyed, of expressing their sentiments through the medium of the Press, subject to such legal restraints as may be thought necessary or that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to appoint a commission of intelligent and independent Gentlemen, to inquire into the real condition of the millions Providence has placed under your high protection.

55th. Your Majesty's faithful subjects from the distance of almost half the globe, appeal to your Majesty's heart by the sympathy which forms a paternal tie between you and the lowest of your subjects, not to overlook their condition ; they appeal to you by the honour of that great nation which under your Royal auspices has obtained the glorious title of Liberator of Europe, not to permit the possibility of millions of your subjects being wantonly trampled on and oppressed ; they lastly appeal to you by the glory of your Crown on which the eyes of the world are fixed, not to consign the natives of India, to perpetual oppression and degradation.

**C. The closing notice of the Mirat-ul-Akhbar as a protest against the Press Regulation.**

MIRAT-OOL-UKHBAR

Friday, April 4, 1823. (Not included in the Regular Numbers )

It was previously intimated, that a Rule and Ordinance was promulgated by His Excellency the Honourable the Governor General in Council, enacting, that a Daily, Weekly, or any Periodical Paper should not be published in this City, without an affidavit being made by its Proprietor in the Police Office, and without a License being procured for such publication from the Chief Secretary to Government ; and that after such License being obtained, it is optional with the Governor General to recall the same, whenever His Excellency may be dissatisfied with any part of the Paper. Be it known, that on the 31st of March, the Honourable Sir Francis Macnaghten, Judge of the Supreme Court, expressed his approbation of the Rule and Ordinance so passed. Under these circumstances, I, the least of all the human race, in consideration of several difficulties, have, with much regret and reluctance, relinquished the publication of this Paper (MIRAT-OOL-UKHBAR). The difficulties are these :—

First—Although it is very easy for those European Gentlemen, who have the honour to be acquainted with the Chief Secretary to Government, to obtain a License according to the prescribed form ; yet to a humble individual like myself, it is very hard to make his way through the porters and attendants of a great Personage ; or to enter the doors of the Police Court, crowded with people of all classes, for the purpose of obtaining what is in fact, already in my own option. As it is written—

*Abrooe kih bu-sud khoon i jigur dust dihud*

*Bu-oomed-i kurum-e, kha'juh, bu-durban mu-furosh*

The respect which is purchased with a hundred drops of heart's blood, do not thou, in the hope of a favor, commit to the mercy of a porter:



Secondly—To make Affidavit voluntarily in an open Court, in the presence of respectable Magistrates, is looked upon as very mean and censurable by those who watch the conduct of their neighbours. Besides the publication of a Newspaper is not incumbent upon every person, so that he must resort to the evasion of establishing fictitious Proprietors, which is contrary to Law, and repugnant to Conscience.

Thirdly—After incurring the disrepute of solicitation and suffering the dishonour of making Affidavit, the constant apprehension of the License being recalled by Government which would disgrace the person in the eyes of the world, must create such anxiety as entirely to destroy his peace of mind. Because a man by nature liable to err, in telling the real truth cannot help sometimes making use of words and selecting phrases that might be unpleasant to Government. I however, here prefer silence to speaking out :

*Guda—e goshuh nusheenee to Khafiza mukhurosh  
Roo mooz muslubut-i khash khoos-rowan danund.*

Thou O Hafiz, art a poor retired man, be silent :  
Princes know the secrets of their own Policy.

I now entreat those kind and liberal gentlemen of Persia and Hindoostan, who have honoured the MIRAT-OOL-UKHBAR with their patronage, that in consideration of the reasons above stated, they will excuse the non-fulfilment of my promise to make them acquainted with passing events, as stated in the introductory remarks in the first Number ; and I earnestly hope from their liberality, that wherever and however I may be situated, they will always consider me, the humblest of the human race, as devoted to their service.\*

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\* This English translation from the original Persian appeared in the *Calcutta Journal*, April 10, 1823.—*Editors.*

## II

### RAMMOHUN ROY'S LETTER TO LORD AMHERST ON WESTERN EDUCATION.

To

His Excellency the Right Hon'ble William Pitt,

Lord Amherst.

My Lord,

Humbly reluctant as the natives of India are to obtrude upon the notice of Government the sentiments they entertain on any public measure, there are circumstances when silence would be carrying this respectful feeling to culpable excess. The present Rulers of India, coming from a distance of many thousand miles to govern a people whose language, literature, manners, customs, and ideas are almost entirely new and strange to them, cannot easily become so intimately acquainted with their real circumstances, as the natives of the country are themselves. We should therefore be guilty of a gross dereliction of duty to ourselves, and afford our Rulers just ground of complaint at our apathy, did we omit on occasions of importance like the present to supply them with such accurate information as might enable them to devise and adopt measures calculated to be beneficial to the country, and thus second by our local knowledge and experience their declared benevolent intentions for its improvement.

The establishment of a new Sangscrit School in Calcutta evinces the laudable desire of Government to improve the Natives of India by Education,—a blessing for which they must ever be grateful ; and every well wisher of the human race must be desirous that the efforts made to promote it, should be guided by the most enlightened principles, so that the stream of intelligence may flow into the most useful channels.

When this Seminary of learning was proposed, we understood that the Government in England had ordered a consider-



able sum of money to be annually devoted to the instruction of its Indian Subjects. We were filled with sanguine hopes that this sum would be laid out in employing European Gentlemen of talents and education to instruct the natives of India in Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy and other useful Sciences, which the Nations of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitants of other parts of the world.

While we looked forward with pleasing hope to the dawn of knowledge thus promised to the rising generation, our hearts were filled with mingled feelings of delight and gratitude ; we already offered up thanks to Providence for inspiring the most generous and enlightened of the Nations of the West with the glorious ambitions of planting in Asia the Arts and Sciences of modern Europe.

We now find that the Government are establishing a Sangscrit school under Hindoo pundits to impart such knowledge as is already current in India. This seminary (similar in character to those which existed in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon) can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practicable use to the possessors or to society. The pupils will there acquire what was known two thousand years ago, with the addition of vain and empty subtelties since produced by speculative men, such as is already commonly taught in all parts of India.

The Sangscrit language so difficult that almost a life time is necessary for its perfect acquisition, is well known to have been for ages a lamentable check on the diffusion of knowledge ; and the learning concealed under the almost impervious veil is far from sufficient to reward the labour of acquiring it. But if it were thought necessary to perpetuate this language for the sake of the portion of the valuable information it contains, this might be much more easily accomplished by other means than the establishment of a new Sangscrit College ; for there have been always and are now numerous professors of Sangscrit in the different parts of the country, engaged in teaching this language as well as the other branches of literature,

which are to be the object of the new Seminary. Therefore their more diligent cultivation, if desirable, would be effectually promoted by holding out premiums and granting certain allowances to those most eminent Professors, who have already undertaken on their own account to teach them, and would by such rewards be stimulated to still greater exertions.

From these considerations, as the sum set apart for the instruction of the Natives of India was intended by the Government in England, for the improvement of its Indian subjects, I beg leave to state, with due deference to your Lordship's exalted situation, that if the plan now adopted be followed, it will, completely defeat the object proposed ; since no improvement can be expected from inducing young men to consume dozen of years of the most valuable period of their lives in acquiring the niceties of the Byakurun or Sangscrit Grammar. For instance, in learning to discuss such points as the following : *Khad* signifying to eat, *khaduti*, he or she or it eats. Query, whether does the word *khaduti* taken as a whole, convey the meaning *he*, *she*, or *it eats*, or are separate parts of this meaning conveyed by distinct portions of the word ? As if in the English language it were asked, how much meaning is there in the *eat*, how much in the *s* ? and, is the whole meaning of the word conveyed by those two portions of it distinctly, or by them taken jointly ?

Neither can such improvement arise from such speculations as the following, which are the themes suggested by the Vedant :—In what manner is the soul absorbed into the deity ? What relation does it bear to the divine essence ? Nor will youths be fitted to be better members of society by the Vedantic doctrines, which teach them to believe that all visible things have no real existence ; that as father, brother, etc., have no actual entity, they consequently deserve no real affection, and therefore the sooner we escape from them and leave the world the better. Again, no essential benefit can be derived by the student of the Meemangsa from knowing what it is that makes the killer of a goat sinless on pronouncing certain passages of the Veds and what is the real nature and operative influence of passages of the Ved, etc.



Again the student of the Nyaya Shastra cannot be said to have improved his mind after he has learned it into how many ideal classes the objects in the Universe are divided, and what speculative relation the soul bears to the body, the body to the soul, the eye to the ear, etc.

In order to enable your Lordship to appreciate the utility of encouraging such imaginary learning as above characterised, I beg your Lordship will be pleased to compare the state of science and literature in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon, with the progress of knowledge made since he wrote.

If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner, the Sanscrit system of education would be best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British Legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy, with other useful sciences which may be accomplished with the sum proposed by employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning educated in Europe, and providing a college furnished with the necessary books, instruments and other apparatus.

In representing this subject to your Lordship I conceive myself discharging a solemn duty which I owe to my countrymen and also to that enlightened Sovereign and Legislature which have extended their benevolent cares to this distant land actuated by a desire to improve its inhabitants and I therefore humbly trust you will excuse the liberty I have taken in thus expressing my sentiments to your Lordship.

Calcutta,  
The 11th December 1823.

I have etc.,  
RAMMOHUN ROY.

### III

## CONGRATULATORY ADDRESS PRESENTED TO LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK BY RAMMOHUN AND HIS FRIENDS ON THE ABOLITION OF SUTTEE,

### A. Bengali Address.

মহামহিম শ্রীল শ্রীযুত লর্ড উলিএম কেবেণ্ডিশ বেক্টিঙ্ক গবরনর  
জনরেল বাহাদুর ইন কৌনসল মহামহিমেষু

ফোর্ট উলিএম

পরের নাম লিখিত কলিকাতা নগরস্থায়ী এবং তন্নিকটস্থ গ্রামনিবাসিরা  
শ্রীল শ্রীযুতের মহোপকারে প্রফুল্ল অন্তঃকরণ সহিত এবং প্রচুর সন্মম পূর্বক  
প্রার্থনা করিতেছে যে শ্রীল শ্রীযুতের অনুমতিক্রমে সমীপস্থ হইয়া হিন্দু-  
প্রজাদের স্ত্রীপরম্পরার জীবন রক্ষার জন্ত মহামহিম ইদানীন্তন যে উপাদেয়  
নিয়ম করিয়াছেন এবং স্বেচ্ছাপূর্বক স্ত্রীবধকলঙ্ক আর আত্মঘাতের অতিশয়  
উৎসাহকারী রূপ দুর্গাম হইতে চিরকালের জন্ত এ শরণাগত প্রজাদিগ্গে  
মোচন করিতে যে করুণাযুক্ত হইয়া সুসিদ্ধ যত্ন করিয়াছেন সেই পরোপকারের  
পুনঃ ২ স্বীকার করিতে অনুমতি প্রাপ্ত হয়। হিন্দুপ্রধানেরা আপন ২  
স্ত্রীপরম্পরার প্রতি অতিশয় সন্দিগ্ধচিত্ত হইয়া পরস্পর নির্বাহের সাধারণ  
সেতুকে উল্লঙ্ঘন এবং অবলা জাতির রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ যে পুরুষের নিয়ত ধর্ম  
তাহাকে অবজ্ঞা করিয়া বিধবারা উত্তরকালে কোনক্রমে অত্যাশঙ্ক না হইতে  
পান তন্নিমিত্ত আপনাদের অবাধিত ক্ষমতার উপর নির্ভরপূর্বক ধর্মহলে  
সজীব বিধবারা যে স্বামির মরণের পরেই শোকের ও নৈরাশ্যের প্রথম উন্মুখে  
আপন ২ শরীর দগ্ধ করেন এই রীতি চলিত করিলেন। ওই স্ত্রী পরম্পরা  
দাহের রীতি স্বার্থপর এবং পরানুগামী ইতর লোকেরও অত্যন্ত মনোনীত  
হইবাতে তাহারাও তদনুরূপ ব্যবহারে ঝটিত প্রবর্ত হইয়া আপনাদের অত্যন্ত  
মাণ্ড শাস্ত্র উপনিষত্ ও ভগবদগীতাকে অবহেলন করিয়া এবং ভগবান মহু  
যিনি প্রথম ও সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ ধর্মবক্তা হন তাঁহার যে আজ্ঞা অর্থাৎ ক্ষমা অবলম্বন  
তপোরূপ ধর্মযাজন আর আপনাকে কায়িক সুখ হইতে রহিত করণ ইত্যাদি



ধর্ম আমরণান্ত বিধবা করিতে থাকিবেন, ৫ অধ্যায়ে ১৫৮ শ্লোক, তাহাকেও তুচ্ছ করিলেন। বাস্তবিক ইহারা স্ত্রী পরম্পরার প্রতি আপন ২ সন্ধিদ্ধান্তঃ-করণের সান্ত্বনার নিমিত্ত এইরূপ ব্যবহারে উদ্বৃত্ত হইলেন কিন্তু লোকেতে এমত গর্হিত কর্ম হইতে আপনাদিগ্গে নির্দোষ কহিবার মিথ্যা বাসনায় সাক্ষাত্‌ দুর্বল শাস্ত্রের কতিপয় বচন যাহাতে স্বেচ্ছাপূর্ব্বক বিধবাকে স্বামির জলচ্চিত্তারোহণ করিবার অনুমতি দিয়াছেন তাহা পাঠ করিতেন যেন তাঁহারা এরূপ স্ত্রীদাহ শাস্ত্রের আজ্ঞানুসারে করিতেছিলেন কিন্তু স্ত্রীলোকের প্রতি সন্দেহে মুগ্ধ হইয়া করেন নাই। বস্তুত ইহা অতিশয় সৌভাগ্য যে শ্রীল শ্রীযুত ইংলণ্ডীয় এতদেশাধিপতিরা যাহাদের আশ্রয়ে ঈশ্বর প্রসাদাত্‌ এদেশীয় স্ত্রীপুরুষ তাবৎ প্রজাদের জীবন সমর্পিত হইয়াছে তাঁহারা বিশেষ অনুসন্ধান দ্বারা নিশ্চয় রূপ জানিলেন যে ওই সকল দুর্বল শাস্ত্রের বচন যাহাতে বিধবা-দিগ্গে ইচ্ছাপূর্ব্বক জলচ্চিত্তারোহণের অনুমতি আছে তাহাকে কার্য্যের দ্বারা অমাত্র করিতেছিলেন এবং ওই সকল বচনের শব্দের ও তাৎপর্য্যের সম্পূর্ণ মতে অত্যা করিয়া পতিবিহীনাদের আত্ম অন্তরঙ্গেরা ওই বিহ্বলাদের দাহকালীন তাহাদিগ্গে প্রায় বন্ধন করিতেন এবং তাঁহারা চিতা হইতে পলাইতে না পারেন এ নিমিত্ত তাৎপ্রে (sic) রাশীকৃত তৃণ কাষ্ঠাদি দ্বারা তাহাদের গাত্র আচ্ছন্ন করিতেন মনুষ্যস্বভাবের ও করুণার সর্ব্বথা বিরুদ্ধ এই ব্যাপার ভূরি স্থানে পুলিশের সংক্রান্ত আমলা যাহারা প্রাণীর রক্ষার ও লোকের শান্তি ও স্বচ্ছন্দতার নিমিত্তে ব্যর্থ নিযুক্ত হইয়াছেন তাহাদের অস্পষ্ট অনুমতিক্রমে সম্পন্ন হইতেছিল।

অনেক স্থলে যেখানে সক্ষম মেজেস্ট্রেট সাহেবের আশঙ্কায় পুলিশের এতদেশীয় আমলা আপন ২ ইচ্ছারূপ আচরণে নিবারণিত ছিল কেহ ২ বিধবা কিঞ্চিৎ দগ্ধ হইয়া চিতা হইতে পলায়নপূর্ব্বক প্রাণ রক্ষা করিয়াছেন কেহ ২ বা ভয়ঙ্কর ব্যাপার দেখিয়া চিতার নিকট হইতে নিবর্ত্ত হইলেন যাহার দ্বারা তাঁহাদের প্রবর্ত্তকদের মরণতুল্য নৈরাশ্য জন্মিল : কোন ২ স্থানে বিধবাদিগ্গে এরূপ মরণ উচিত্‌ নহে ইহা বিশেষ মতে বোধগম্য করাতে এবং তাঁহাদের রক্ষার এবং যাবজ্জীবন প্রতিপালনের অঙ্গীকার করিবাতে তাঁহারা আপনাদের জাতি ও আত্মীয় কর্ত্ত্বক ভর্ত্তসনরাণিকে আপনাদের উপর স্বীকার করিয়াও সহমরণ হইতে নিবর্ত্ত হইয়াছেন। তাবত্‌ সহমরণ ঘটিত ব্যাপারে যাহা স্বয়ং অতি দারুণ ও কুৎসিত এবং ইংলণ্ডীয় অধিকারের নীতির অতি বিরুদ্ধ তাহার প্রণিধানপূর্ব্বক শ্রীল শ্রীযুত কোঁনসলে বিচার ও করুণা উভয়ই

প্রদর্শিত নীতির বিশেষানুষ্ঠানে উদ্যুক্ত হইয়া ইংলণ্ডীয় নামের মহিমা স্মৃচনার্থ আবশ্যক কর্তব্যবোধ এই ২ নিয়মকে নির্দ্ধারিত করিলেন যে শ্রীল শ্রীযুতের হিন্দুপ্রজাদের জীলোকের প্রাণরক্ষা অধিক যত্নপূর্ব্বক করিতে হইবেক এবং জীলোকের প্রতি নিষ্ঠুর ব্যবহার অতিশয় পাতক পুনর্ব্বার আর হইতে না পায়, এবং হিন্দুদের অতি প্রাচীন পরম পবিত্র ধর্ম্মকে তাঁহারা নিজে যেন তুচ্ছ না করেন। সাম্প্রতিক এ অধীনদের জ্ঞাতসার হইল ওই আজ্ঞানুসারে মেজেষ্ট্রেট সাহেবদের প্রতি বিশেষরূপে লিপি প্রস্থাপিত হইয়াছে যে সর্ব্বোপায়ের দ্বারা শ্রীল শ্রীযুতের আজ্ঞা প্রতিপালন করেন।

শ্রীল শ্রীযুতের মহোচ্চপদের নিয়মের বিবেচনা করিয়া এ শরণাগত প্রজারা আপনাদের অন্তঃকরণের ভাবকে কোন প্রকাশিত সম্মানের চিহ্ন যাহা এমত স্থানে ব্যবহার্য্য হয় তদ্বারা দর্শাইতে নিবারিত হইয়াছে কিন্তু এ অধীনদের অন্তঃকরণ ও ধর্ম্ম বারম্বার আজ্ঞা দিতেছেন যে এ শরণাগতরা অন্তঃকরণের ভাব যাহা তাবৎ হিন্দুর প্রতি পরমানুগ্রাহক শ্রীল শ্রীযুতের এই চিরস্থায়ী মহোপকার কর্তৃক উৎপন্ন হইয়াছে তাহা সর্ব্বসাধারণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি করা যায় ; যদি এ সময় এ শরণাগতরা তাচ্ছিল্যপূর্ব্বক মৌনাবলম্বন করে তবে সর্ব্বথা কৃতঘ্ন ও প্রবঞ্চকরূপে গণিত হইবেক এ নিমিত্ত এ অধীনেরা এ নিবেদন পত্রীকে এই প্রার্থনার দ্বারা সমাপ্তি করিতেছে যে এ অধীনদের সর্ব্বান্তঃকরণ সহিত শ্রীল শ্রীযুতের মহোপকারের অঙ্গীকার রূপ উপহার যাহা যত্বাপি শ্রীল শ্রীযুতের মহোচ্চপদের যোগ্য হয় না, তাহা রূপাপূর্ব্বক গ্রাহ করেন। ও যাহারা শ্রীল শ্রীযুতের এই পরম অনুগ্রহকে এ অধীনদের সহিত তুল্যরূপে প্রাপ্ত হইয়াছেন অথচ এই সর্ব্বসাধারণ কর্ম্মে অজ্ঞতা অথবা অসংস্কার প্রযুক্ত অধীনদের সহিত ঐক্য হইলেন নাই তাহাদের এই ঔদাস্তিকে রূপাপূর্ব্বক ক্ষমা করেন সবিনয় নিবেদনমিতি।

## B. English Address.

To the Right Honorable Lord William Cavendish Bentinck  
K. C. B. G. C.H. Governor General in Council, Fort William.

My Lord—With hearts filled with the deepest gratitude, and impressed with the utmost reverence, we the undersigned Native inhabitants of Calcutta and its vicinity, beg to be permitted to approach your Lordship, to offer personally our humble but warmest acknowledgements for the invaluable



protection which your Lordship's Government has recently afforded to the lives of the Hindoo Female part of your subjects and for your humane and successful exertions in rescuing us, for ever, from the gross stigma hitherto attached to our character, as wilful murderers of females and zealous promoters of the practice of suicide.

Excessive jealousy of their female connections operating in the breasts of Hindoo Princes rendered those despots regardless of the common bonds of society, and of their incumbent duty as protectors of the weaker sex, in so much that with a view to prevent every possibility of their Widows forming subsequent attachments, they availed themselves of their arbitrary power, and under cloak of religion, introduced the practice of burning Widows alive, under the first impressions of sorrow or despair, immediately after the demise of their Husbands. This system of female destruction, being admirably suited to the selfish and servile disposition of the populace, has been eagerly followed by them, in defiance of the most sacred authorities such as Oopunishuds or the principal part of the Veds and the Bhugvut Geeta, as well as of the direct commandment of Munoo, the first and the greatest of all the Legislators, conveyed in the following words :—

“Let a Widow continue till death forgiving all injuries performing austere duties, avoiding every sensual pleasure, &c.” (Ch. V. v. 158).

While in fact, fulfilling the suggestions of their jealousy, they pretended to justify this hideous practice by quoting some passages from authorities of evidently inferior weight, sanctioning the wilfull (sic.) ascent of a widow on the flaming pile of her husband, as if they were offering such female sacrifices in obedience to the dictates of the Shastrus, and not from the influence of jealousy. It is however very fortunate that the British Government, under whose protection the lives of both the males and females of India have been happily placed by Providence, has, after diligent enquiry, ascertained that even those inferior authorities, permitting wilful ascent by a Widow to the flaming pile, have been practically set aside, and that, in gross violation of their language and spirit, the relatives of Widows, have, in the burning of those infatuated females,

almost invariably used to fasten them down on the pile and heap over them large quantities of wood and other materials adequate to the prevention of their escape, an outrage on humanity which has been frequently perpetrated under the indirect sanction of Native Officers undeservedly employed for the security of life and preservation of peace and tranquility.

In many instances in which the vigilance of the Magistrate has deterred the Native Officers of Police from indulging their own inclination, widows have either made their escape from the pile, after being partially burnt, or retraced their resolution to burn when brought to the awful task, to the mortifying disappointment of instigators ; while in some instances, the resolution to die has been retraced on pointing out to the widows the impropriety of their intended undertaking, and on promising them safety and maintenance during life, notwithstanding the severe reproaches liable thereby to be heaped on them by their relatives and friends.

In consideration of circumstances so disgraceful in themselves and so incompatible with the principles of British Rule, your Lordship in Council, fully impressed with the duties required of you by justice and humanity, has deemed it incumbent on you for the honour of the British name, to come to the resolution that the lives of your female Hindoo subjects should be henceforth more efficiently protected, that the heinous sin of cruelty to females may no longer be committed and that the most ancient and purest system of Hindoo Religion should not any longer be set at nought by the Hindoos themselves. The Magistrates in consequence are, we understand, positively ordered to execute the resolution of the Government by all possible means.

We are, my Lord, reluctantly restrained by the consideration of the nature of your exalted situation from indicating our inward feelings by presenting any valuable offering as commonly adopted on such occasions, but we should consider ourselves highly guilty of insincerity and ingratitude, if we remained negligently silent, when urgently called upon by our feelings and conscience to express publicly the gratitude we feel for the ever lasting obligation you have graciously conferred on the



Hindoo Community at large. We however are at a loss to find language sufficiently indicative even of a small portion of the sentiments we are desirous of expressing on this occasion : We must therefore conclude this Address, with entreating, that your Lordship will condescendingly accept our most grateful acknowledgements for this act of benevolence towards us, and will pardon the silence of those who, though equally partaking of the blessing bestowed by your Lordship, have through ignorance or prejudice omitted to join us in this common cause.

We have the honour to be

My Lord

Your Lordship's Obdt. and Humble Servts.

[Signed] Callynath Roy Choudhury  
Rammohun Roy  
Dwarkanath Tagore  
Prossanno Comar Tagore  
&c. &c. &c.

### **C. Reply of Bentinck to the Hindoo Address.**

It is very satisfactory to me to find that according to the opinions of so many respectable and intelligent Hindoos, the practice which has recently been prohibited, not only was not required by the rules of their religion, but was at variance with those writings which they deem to be of the greatest force and authority. Nothing but a reluctance to inflict punishment for acts which might conscientiously be believed to be enjoined by religious precepts, could have induced the British Government at any time to permit, within territories under its protection, an usage so violently opposed to the best feelings of human nature. Those who present this Address are right in supposing that, by every nation in the world, except the Hindoos themselves, this part of their customs has always been made a reproach against them, and nothing so strongly contrasted with the better features of their own national character, so

inconsistent with the affections which unite families, so destructive of the moral principles on which society is founded, has ever subsisted amongst a people, in other respects so civilized. I trust that the reproach is removed for ever, and I feel a sincere pleasure in thinking that the Hindoos will thereby be exalted in the estimation of mankind to an extent in some degree proportioned to the repugnance which was felt for the usage which has now ceased.

[Signed] W. C. Bentinck.

Calcutta, Jan. 16, 1830.



#### IV

#### THE TRUST DEED OF THE BRAHMO SAMAJ

THIS INDENTURE made the eighth day of January, in the year of Christ one thousand eight hundred and thirty **between** Dwarkanauth Tagore of Jorasanko in the Town of Calcutta Zumeendar, Kaleenauth Roy of Burranagore in the Zillah of Havelly in the Suburbs of Calcutta aforesaid Zumeendar, Prussunnocoomar Tagore of Pattoriaghatta in Calcutta aforesaid Zumeendar, Ramchunder Bidyabagish of Simlah in Calcutta aforesaid Pundit and Rammohun Roy of Manicktullah in Calcutta aforesaid Zumeendar of the one part and Boykontonauth Roy of Burranagur in the Zillah of Havelly in the Suburbs of the Town of Calcutta aforesaid Zumeendar, Radapersaud Roy of Manicktullah in Calcutta aforesaid Zumeender and Ramanauth Tagore of Jorasanko Calcutta aforesaid Banian (Trustees named and appointed for the purposes hereinafter mentioned) of the other part **witnesseth** that for and in consideration of the sum of Sicca Rupees Ten of Lawful money of Bengal by the said Boykontonauth Roy, Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore to the said Dwarkanauth Tagore, Kalleenauth Roy, Prussunnocoomar Tagore, Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy in hand paid at and before the sealing and delivery of these Presents (the receipt whereof they the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy do and each and every of them doth hereby acknowledge) and for settling and assuring the messuage land tenements heriditaments and premises hereinafter mentioned to be hereby granted and released to for and upon such uses trusts intents and purposes as are hereafter expressed and declared of and concerning the same and for divers other good Causes and Considerations them hereunto especially moving they the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy Have and each and every of them Hath granted bargained sold aliened released and confirmed and by

these presents Do and each and every of them Doth grant bargain sell alien release and confirm unto the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore their heirs and assigns **all** that brick built messuage (hereafter to be used as a place for religious worship as is hereinafter more fully expressed and declared) Building or Tenement with the piece or parcel of Land or Ground thereunto belonging and on part whereof the same is erected and built containing by estimation four Cottahs and two Chittacks be the same a little more or less situate lying and being in the Chitpore Road in Sootanooty in the Town of Calcutta aforesaid and butted and bounded as follows (that is to say) on the north by the House and Ground now or formerly belonging to one Fooloorey Rutton on the south by the House and Ground formerly belonging to one Ramkristno Kur since deceased on the east by the House and Ground now or formerly belonging to one Fooloorey Rutton on the South by the House and Ground formerly belonging to one Ramkristno Kur since deceased on the east by the House and Ground now or formerly belonging to one Radamoney Bhamonney and on the west by the said public Road or Street commonly called Chitpore Road or howsoever otherwise the said messuage building land tenements and hereditament or any of them now are or is or heretofore were or was situated tenanted called known described or distinguished and all other the messuages lands tenements and hereditaments (if any) which are or are expressed or intended to be described or comprised in a certain Indenture of bargain and sale hereinafter referred to **together** with all and singular the out houses offices edifices buildings erections Compounds Yards walls ditches hedges fences enclosures ways paths passages woods underwoods shrubs timber and other trees entrances casements lights privileges profits benefits emoluments advantages rights titles members appendages and appurtenances whatsoever to the said messuage building land tenements hereditaments and premises or any part or parcel thereof belonging or in any wise appertaining or with the same or any part or parcel thereof now or at any time or times heretofore held used occupied possessed or enjoyed or accepted reputed deemed taken or known as part parcel or member there-



of or any part thereof (all which said messuage building land tenements hereditaments and premises are now in the actual possession of or legally vested in the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore by virtue of a bargain and sale to them thereof made by the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy for Sicca Rupees Five Consideration by an Indenture bearing date the day next before the day of the date and executed previous to the sealing and delivery of these Presents for the Term of one whole Year Commencing from the day next preceding the day of the date of the same Indenture and by force of the statute made for transferring uses into possession and the remainder and remainders reversion and reversions Yearly and other rents issues and profits thereof **and all** the Estate Right Title interest trust use possession inheritance property profit benefit claim and demand whatsoever both at Law and in Equity of them the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy respectively of into upon or out of the same or any part thereof Together with all deeds Pottahs evidences muniments and writings whatsoever which relate to the said premises or any part thereof and which now are or hereafter shall or may be in the hands possession or custody of the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy their heirs executors administrators or representatives or of any person or persons from whom he or they can or may procure the same without action or suit at Law or in Equity. **To have and to hold** the said Messuage Building land tenements hereditaments and all and singular other the premises hereinbefore and in the said Indenture of bargain or sale described and mentioned and hereby granted and released or intended so to be and every part and parcel thereof with their and every of their rights members and appurtenances unto the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore their heirs and assigns but to the uses nevertheless upon the trusts and to and for the ends intents and purposes hereinafter declared and expressed of and concerning the same

and to and for no other ends intents and purposes whatsoever (that is to say) **To the use** of the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy Ramanauth Tagore or the survivors or survivor of them or the heirs of such survivor or their or his assigns **upon Trust** and in confidence that they the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore or the survivors or survivor of them or the heirs of such survivors or their or his assigns shall and do from time to time and at all times for ever hereafter permit and suffer the said messuage or building land tenements hereditaments and premises with their appurtenances to be used occupied enjoyed applied and appropriated as and for a place of public meeting of all sorts and descriptions of people without distinction as shall behave and conduct themselves in an orderly sober religious and devout manner for the worship and adoration of the Eternal Unsearchable and Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe but not under or by any other name designation or title peculiarly used for and applied to any particular Being or Beings by any man or set of men whatsoever and that no graven image statue or sculpture carving painting picture portrait or the likeness of anything shall be admitted within the said messuages building land tenements hereditaments and premises and that no sacrifice offering or oblation of any kind or thing shall ever be permitted therein and that no animal or living creature shall within or on the said messuage building land tenements hereditaments and premises be deprived of life either for religious purposes or for food and that no eating or drinking (except such as shall be necessary by any accident for the preservation of life) feasting or rioting be permitted therein or thereon and that in conducting the said worship and adoration no object animate or inanimate that has been or is or shall hereafter become or be recognized as an object of worship by any man or set of men shall be reviled or slightingly or contemptuously spoken of or alluded to either in preaching praying or in the hymns or other mode of worship that may be delivered or used in the said Messuage or building and that no sermon preaching discourse prayer or hymn be delivered made or used in such worship but such



as have a tendency to the promotion of the contemplation of the Author and Preserver of the Universe to the promotion of charity morality piety benevolence virtue and the strengthening the bonds of union Between men of all religious persuasions and creeds and also that a person of Good repute and well known for his knowledge piety and morality be employed by the said trustees or the survivors or survivor of them or the heirs of such survivor or their or his assigns as a resident Superintendent and for the purpose of superintending the worship so to be performed as is hereinbefore stated and expressed and that such worship be performed daily or at least as often as once in seven days **Provided always** and it is hereby declared and agreed by and between the parties to these presents that in case the several Trustees in and by these presents named and appointed or any of them or any other succeeding Trustees or Trustee of the said trust estate and premises for the time being to be nominated or appointed as hereinafter is mentioned shall depart this life or be desirous to be discharged of or from the aforesaid Trusts or shall refuse or neglect or become incapable by or in any manner to act in the said trusts then and in such case and from time to time as often and as soon as any such event shall happen it shall be lawful for the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy during their joint lives or the survivors or survivor of them after the death of any or either of them jointly and in concurrence with the Trustees or Trustee for the time being and in case of and after the death of the survivor of them the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy then for the said Trustees or Trustee by any deed or writing under their or his hands and seals or hand and seal to be attested by two or more credible Witnesses to nominate substitute and appoint some other fit person or persons to supply the place of the Trustees or Trustee respectively so dying desiring to be discharged or refusing or neglecting or becoming incapable by or in any manner to act as aforesaid and that immediately after any such appointment shall be made all and every the message or

building land tenements and hereditaments premises which under and by virtue of these presents shall be then vested in the Trustees or Trustee so dying desiring to be discharged or refusing or neglecting or becoming incapable by or in any manner to act as aforesaid shall be conveyed transferred assigned and assured so and in such manner that the same shall and may be legally fully and absolutely vested in the Trustees or Trustee so to be appointed in their or his room or stead either solely and alone or jointly with the surviving continuing or acting Trustees or Trustee as the case may require and in his or their heirs or assigns to the uses upon the Trusts and to and for the several ends intents and purposes hereinbefore declared or expressed concerning the same and that every such new Trustees or Trustee shall and may act and assist in the management carrying on and execution of the Trusts to which they or he shall be so appointed (although they or he shall not have been invested with the seisin of the Trustees or Trustee to whose places or place they or he shall have succeeded) either jointly with the surviving continuing or other acting Trustees or Trustee or solely as the case may require in such and the like manner and in all respects as if such new Trustees or Trustee had been originally appointed by these presents **Provided lastly** and it is hereby further declared and agreed by and between the said Parties to these presents that no one or more of the said Trustees shall be answerable or accountable for the other and others of them nor for the acts defaults or omissions of the other or others of them any consent permission or privity by any or either of them to any act deed or thing to or by the other or others of them done with an intent and for the purpose only of facilitating the Execution of the trusts of these presents notwithstanding nor shall any new appointed Trustees or Trustee or their or his heirs or assigns be answerable or accountable for the acts deeds neglect defaults or omissions of any Trustees or Trustee in or to whose place or places they or he shall or may succeed but such of them the said Trustees shall be answerable accountable and responsible for his own respective acts deeds neglects defaults or omissions only **and** the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and



Rammohun Roy do hereby for themselves severally and respectively and for their several and respective heirs executors administrators and representatives covenant grant declare and agree with and to the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy Ramanauth Tagore their heirs and assigns in manner Following (that is to say) that for and notwithstanding any act deed matter or thing whatsoever heretofore by the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy or any or either of them had made done committed willingly or willingly omitted or suffered to the contrary they the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy at the time of the sealing and delivery of these presents are or one of them is lawfully rightfully and absolutely seized in their or his demesne as of Fee in their or his own right and to their or his own use of the said messuage building land tenements hereditaments and premises mentioned and intended to be hereby granted and released with the appurtenances both at Law and in Equity as of in and for a good sure perfect and indefeasible estate of inheritance in fee simple in possession and in severally without any Condition Contingent Trust Proviso power of limitation or revocation of any use or uses or any other restraint matter or thing whatsoever which can or may Alter Change Charge determine lessen incumber defeat prejudicially affect or make void the same or defeat determine abridge or vary the uses or trusts hereby declared and expressed and also that they the said Dwarkanauth Tagore, Kaleenauth Roy, Prussunnocoomar Tagore, Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy (for and notwithstanding any such act deed matter or thing as aforesaid) or some of them now have in themselves or one of them hath in himself full power and Lawful and Absolute Authority by these presents to grant bargain sell release and assure the said messuage land tenements hereditaments and premises mentioned and intended to be hereby granted and Released with the appurtenances and the possession reversion and inheritance thereof unto and to the use of the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore and their heirs to the uses upon the Trusts and to and for the ends intents and purposes hereinbefore

expressed or declared of and concerning the same according to the True intent and meaning of these presents **and further** that said message or building land tenements hereditaments and premises with their rights members and appurtenances shall from time to time and at all times hereafter remain continue and be to the use upon the Trusts and for the ends intents and purposes hereinbefore declared or expressed concerning the same and shall and lawfully may be peaceably and quietly holden and enjoyed and applied and appropriated accordingly without the let suit hindrance claim demand interruption or denial of the said Dwarkanauth Tagore, Kaleenauth Roy, Prussunnocoomar Tagore, Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy or any or either of them or any or either of their heirs representatives or of any other person or persons now or hereafter claiming or to claim or possessing any estate right title trust or interest of into or out of the same or any part or parcel thereof by from under or in trust for them or any or either of them and that free and clear and clearly and absolutely acquitted exonerated and discharged or otherwise by the said Dwarkanauth Tagore Kaleenauth Roy Prussunnocoomar Tagore Ramchunder Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy or any or either of them their or any or either of their Heirs executors administrators and representatives well and sufficiently saved harmless and kept indemnified of from and against all and all manner of former and other gifts grants bargains Sales Leases Mortgages uses wills devises rents arrears of rents estates titles charges and other incumbrances whatsoever had made done committed created suffered or executed by the said Dwarkanauth Tagore, Kaleenauth Roy, Prussunnocoomar Tagore, Ramchunder Bidyadagish and Rammohun Roy or any or either of them or any or either of their heirs or representatives or any person or persons now or hereafter rightfully claiming or possessing any estate right title or interest at Law or in Equity from through under or in trust for them or any or either of them or with their or any or either of their consent privity or procurement or acts means or defaults **and moreover** that the said Dwarkanauth Tagore, Kaleenauth Roy, Prussunnocoomar Tagore, Ramchunder



Bidyabagish and Rammohun Roy or their heirs and representatives and all and every other person or persons whomsoever now or hereafter lawfully equitably and rightfully claiming or possessing any estate right title use trust or interest either at Law or in Equity of into upon or out of the said messuage land tenements hereditaments and premises mentioned or intended to be hereby granted and released with the appurtenances or any part thereof by from under or in trust for them or any or either of them shall and will from time to time and at all times hereafter at the reasonable request of the said Boykontonauth Roy, Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore or the survivors or survivor of them or the heirs of the survivor of their or his assigns make do acknowledge suffer execute and perfect all and every such further and other lawful and reasonable acts things deeds conveyances and assurances in the Law whatsoever for the further better more perfectly absolutely and satisfactorily granting conveying releasing confirming and assuring the said messuage or building land tenements hereditaments and premises mentioned to be hereby granted and released and every part and parcel thereof and the possession reversion and inheritance of the same with their and every of their appurtenances unto the said Boykontonauth Roy Radapersaud Roy and Ramanauth Tagore or other the Trustees or Trustee for the time being and their heirs for the uses upon the Trusts and to and for the ends intents and purposes hereinbefore declared and expressed as by the said Trustees and Trustee or his or their counsel learned in the Law shall be reasonably devised or advised and required so as such further assurance or assurances contain or imply in them no further or other Warranty or Covenants on the part of the person or persons who shall be required to make or execute the same then for or against the acts deeds omissions or defaults of him her or them or his her or their heirs executors administrators and so that he she or they be not compelled or compellable to go or travel from the usual place of his her or their respective abode for making or executing the same. **In witness** whereof the said parties to these presents have hereunto subscribed and set

their hands and seals the day and Year first within written.

Dwarkanauth Tagore.

Callynauth Roy.

Prossonocoomar Tagore.

শ্রীরামচন্দ্র বিজ্ঞাবাগীশ\*

Rammohun Roy.

Boycontonauth Roy.

Radapersaud Roy.

Ramanauth Tagore.

Sealed and delivered at Calcutta  
aforesaid in the presence of

J. Fountain.

Atty. at Law,

Ramgopaul Day.

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\* As he did not know English, Pandit Ramchandra Vidyā-vāgīś signed his name in Bengali.—*Editors.*



## V

### PETITION OF AKBAR II, THE MUGHAL KING OF DELHI, TO KING GEORGE IV OF ENGLAND, AS DRAFTED BY RAMMOHUN ROY.

To

His Majesty the King of the British Empire,  
Etc., etc., etc.

Sire ! My Brother ! It is with a mingled feeling of humility and pride that I approach your Majesty with the language of fraternal equality at the very time that the occasion of my addressing your Majesty compels me to consider myself rather as a suppliant at the footstool of your Majesty's throne than as a Monarch entitled to assume the style, and claim the privileges of royalty.

2. Sire ! I do not forget who or what I am, I cannot forget that I am a King only in name, and that I have nothing in common with your Majesty and the other sovereigns of the earth but a title conceded to me with no other effect than to aggravate the humiliation and unhappiness in which I am involved. Yet low as is my condition I have not lost the feelings of humanity, and I claim from your Majesty that justice which is not denied to the meanest of your Majesty's subjects.

3. I do not forget it who and what your Majesty is—that your Majesty is the rightful and acknowledged sovereign of a powerful, a wise and renowned people, and that, in the plentitude of your Majesty's greatness, even a small portion of your Majesty's subjects are permitted to exercise the government of these vast and populous territories which it was the glory of many of my ancestors to rule in person. But I also remember that those very subjects, although elevated to the dignity of empire, are still amenable to your Majesty for every part

of their conduct, and I therefore confidently rely that your Majesty will not permit them wantonly to violate the solemn engagements of their faith and honour pledged to the once dreaded and illustrious, but now powerless house of Timur. In me that race is deeply humbled, but the extensive conquests, the noble actions, and the splendid form of the dynasty which I so unworthily represent, remain imperishably written on the faithful page of history. My ancestors made a magnanimous use of the victories and conquests which their swords, not perfidy or intrigues, achieved. They disdained to trample down on a vanquished foe, even when they could crush him with impunity. The voice of the whole world proclaims that your Majesty is in an eminent degree distinguished by the same sublime and generous virtues and I repose therefore with entire confidence in the innate nobleness of your Majesty's mind and in your Majesty's refined and exalted sense of National faith and justice.

4. I hasten to specify the wrongs of which I complain and to substantiate my allegations by the necessary proofs. In brief, then, I beg to call your Majesty's attention to the accompanying articles of convention which were transmitted to my august father from the Governor-General in Council in conformity with the promise made by Lord Lake and which were duly recognized on both sides as expressive of the mutual obligations of the contracting parties, but of which the first and most important clause is now injuriously evaded.

5. That article provides that "all the Mahals to the west of the Jumna situated between the west and north of *mouza* Kabilpoor shall be considered the crownlands of his Majesty." The second article provides that "the management of these mahals shall be continued according to custom in the hands of the Resident" ; but in proof that the entire revenues were to be placed at the Royal disposal, it is expressly provided in the third article that "for his Majesty's satisfaction, the Royal Mootsuddies (or civil officers) shall attend at the Cutchery to keep accounts of the receipts and disbursements and report the same to his Majesty." The memorandum referred to in the seventh article specifies a minimum of monthly stipends for the King and the Royal Household and that article



provides that the sums so specified shall be paid monthly from the public Treasury, "whether the whole of the amount is or is not collected from the Khalsa lands." The English article to which I solicit your Majesty's special attention contains the important provision that "should the collections from the above mahals increase in consequence of extending cultivation and the improved condition of the ryots a proportioned augmentation will take place in the King's Peshcush or Revenue" and, finally, to shew that the royal stipend was to consist, not of the net, but of the gross produce without any deduction, the eleventh article provides that "the expense of the Troops, Police corps, etc., employed in the Khalsah shall be defrayed by the Honourable Company." What could be more clear and explicit than these provisions? What words could have more strictly guarded against the possibility of perversion or misapprehension? Yet the first and most important point has been since rendered a dead letter, as if neither honour nor justice demanded their fulfilment.

6. In the recent communication which I have had with your Majesty's late representative in India, Lord Amherst, on this subject, there is the admission that "it was the original intention of Government to have assigned certain mahals to the west of the Jumna for the support of His Majesty and the Royal family", but it is added, "The plan was never from unavoidable causes carried completely into effect." It now seems to be tacitly inferred that therefore it ought not ever to be carried into effect. To me and to my family, to my immediate dependents, and to the numerous individuals who cannot refuse their disinterested sympathy to my fallen house, it does not appear clearly to follow, because an act of justice has hitherto been denied that it could never be performed, nor when we consider what British power and influence have accomplished, can we bring ourselves to believe that any causes would have proved unavoidable, if a disposition really favourable to the accomplishment of the object had existed. The assertion, however, that "the plan was never carried completely into effect", is essentially erroneous; for while the revenues of the assigned mahals did not exceed the *minimum* of the Royal stipends and allowances, the Royal Mootsuddies were allowed to attend at

the Cutchery in conformity with the third stipulation, for the express purpose of keeping accounts of the receipts and disbursements and reporting the same to my august father and to myself. The right and title of the Royal family to the entire revenues of the mahals were thus for a length of time distinctly and unequivocally acknowledged by the concession to the Royal mootsuddies of the power of supervision and report, but when those revenues materially exceeded the *minimum* of the Royal stipends, then it was that it became inconvenient to carry the plan completely into effect ; and the Royal Mootsuddies were in consequence directed to withdraw their attendance at the Cutchery. In like manner the practice of submitting by the Resident for my Royal decision the proceedings in cases where capital punishment was adjusted by the Criminal Court, has also long since been discontinued in neglect of the provision contained in the sixth article of agreement.

7. Even in the communication above-mentioned, insult in point of form was added to injustice. All the Governors-General who have preceded Lord Amherst in the government of the British territories in India have thought it no degradation to themselves to address me or my august father in the style that custom has accorded to Royalty. Lord Amherst however thought proper to reduce me in his form of communication to the footing of an equal, and thereby to rob me even of the cheap gratification of the usual ceremonials of address as to humble me as far as possible in the eyes of all ranks of people.

8. Before, however, these derogatory steps were adopted, repeated, solemn and public recognitions of the claims of my Royal family to the revenues of the assigned mahals had been recorded in the code of Regulations and Laws enacted by the Governor-General in Council for the civil government of the territories under the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal. Thus at section 4th of Regulation XI of 1804, it is clearly expressed that "the revenues of the territory on the right bank of the Jumna are assigned to His Majesty Shah Alam" ; and precisely the same language is repeated at sections 22nd and



35 of the same Regulation ; at section 3rd of Regulation VI of 1805, and at sections 2nd and 4th of the Regulation VIII of the same year. At sections 1st and 2nd of Regulation X of 1807, and at section 1st of Regulation XI of the same year, the language is similar although more general, for in these "the territory assigned for the support of the Royal family at Dehlee" is mentioned without specifying its locality as in the former instances, the very absence of this specification marking its notoriety and the distinctness of the purpose to which the revenues of that territory were exclusively applicable. These declarations cannot be disavowed, retracted or misapprehended. They are embodied in the code of Regulations by which this branch of the British Indian Empire is governed, and they incontrovertibly demonstrate that for a series of years the plan was carried completely into effect and the right of my family to the revenues of the districts in question was clearly and undisguisedly admitted.

9. Even the *minimum* of the Royal stipends was at one time arbitrarily and unjustly curtailed of several items, contrary to the express provisions contained in the stipulations and without consent of the contracting party, whose rights were thereby violated, having been obtained or even sought. It was in this way that one of the items amounting to 10,000 Rupees for support of the Heir-Apparent was reduced to 7000, a second of 5000 Rupees for Mirza Ezzud Buxsh to 2000, and a third amounting to Sa. Rs. 2,500 for Shah Newaz Khan a connection of His Majesty, was entirely resumed at his death and his family thus left destitute. To crown these acts it has been pretended that an augmentation to the Royal stipend made in the year 1809 amounting, after several previous deductions, only to Sa. Rs. 13,200 per mensem was granted by way of commutation for the Royal claims on the improved revenues of the Khalsah lands though so far was such an arrangement from receiving my sanction that the increase was only communicated to me as a resolution taken by the Government without the slightest reference to the pretended equivalent.

10. The original articles of agreement are either binding or they are not. If they are binding, then any alteration or

commutation of any part of the Royal income made by one party without the consent of the other, to whom it is injurious, must be null and void. If they are not binding, this must be either because they were never entered into, which cannot be affirmed, or because some subsequent voluntary arrangement between the two contracting parties has superseded their obligation. But no arrangement tending to supersede the original articles of agreement has ever been voluntarily recognized by my Royal predecessor or myself, and therefore the numerous and unauthorized deviations from the provisions which they contain constitute series of direct and systematic violations of truth, honour and justice.

11. A relation of the particulars connected with this pretended increase of Rs. 13,200 per mensem will show to your Majesty how little real was the value of the alleged concession. When the gross and palpable infringements by the local authorities on the stipulation entered into with Lord Wellesley's Government were brought to the notice of Lord Minto in the year 1809 and the Royal claims on the then improved revenues of the Khalsa mahal set forth; that noble man virtually admitted the wrongs that had been inflicted and the total sum of the Royal stipends including the allowances on the Princes and Princesses and every contingency, which after several deductions, then amounted to only Sa. Rs. 86,000, was raised to one lakh, the real augmentation being however considerably less in amount than this apparent one. By Lord Wellesley's agreement the allowance to the Royal family\* was paid under the following heads :—

	Per mensem. Rs.
His Majesty's personal allowance	60,000
Present at 7 festivals Rs. 10,000 each	5,833
The Heir-Apparent	10,000

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\* Cf. Letter from the Governor-General in Council to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, dated June 2, 1805 (J. K. Majumdar *Raja Rammohun Roy and the Last Moghuls* No. 22, pp. 27-31).—Editors.



His jagir in the Dooab	3,000
Princes and Princesses	10,000
Mirza Ezzud Buxsh—personal allowance	2,000
„ „ by his jagir in the Dooab	1,000
Shah Newaz Khan	2,500

Total monthly allowance Rs. 94,333

so that the stipend established by Lord Minto in 1809 then considered as providing an increase of allowance to the extent of Rs. 13,200 per mensem as above stated, and also alleged to be in satisfaction of the terms of the treaty, in fact added no more than the paltry sum of Rs. 5,667 to the original minimum provision. But even this augmentation was granted arbitrarily, without any reference to the amount actually due by stipulation and without my consent being asked or obtained ; and it was moreover accompanied by an insulting intimation that the “sovereignty I possess is only nominal” and that the Governor General’s recognition of it is merely “Complimentary.” Does “the complimentary recognition of a nominal sovereignty” authorize or justify the arbitrary infringement of direct and positive obligations, or denude myself and family of the common rights of men and society ? Because the Governor General in Council condescends to recognize in me an empty title, is it therefore that the solemn faith of the British nation, and Government may be wantonly broken ? Do I become less entitled to the performance of the contract that has been entered into with my family, because my ancestors were great and powerful and I am feeble and helpless, held down by those who make my weakness and degradation the excuse for their injustice ? I cherish the confident persuasion that your Majesty will not sanction the principle that in my case a National contract ought not or need not to be fulfilled, because I am powerless to enforce its obligations. What King or subject will avow such a principle, except in India and to the injured and unhappy House of Taimur ?

12. I have now briefly explained to your Majesty the wrongs I have suffered and the rights which I demand. I claim the entire revenues, whatever they may be, of the mahals

originally assigned for the support of the Royal family unjustly alienated from the rightful owner and appropriated to themselves by the Honourable Company. I claim restitution of the sums of which the Royal family have been deprived in past years, and I claim your Majesty's guarantee for the rigid fulfilment in future of the articles of convention by which a *minimum* is fixed for the Royal stipend, by which the gross revenues of the mahals to the west of the Jumna are assigned to the Royal family should they exceed that *minimum*, and by which the means and opportunity of obtaining a perfect knowledge of the actual revenues of those mahals are stipulated rights. I am not unaware of the practical evil that is likely to result, according to the known principles, of human nature, by imposing upon one party all the toil of superintendence and all the expense of improvement, and bestowing upon another all the fruits of his labour and sacrifices. I am therefore willing to submit to any reasonable compromise of my rights, either by assuming for fit compensation all the trouble and outlay attending the Government, police, and cultivation of the territory in question, or by receiving a fixed monthly sum in lieu of all further claims. In the latter case the present gross annual revenues of the mahals would form a proper standard, and if they do not fall short of 30 lakhs, I hereby offer to commute all my prospective claims under the articles of convention for that yearly stipend.

14. If I were to regard merely your Majesty's personal character, it might be sufficient to show, as I have done, that my claims are just. But your Majesty has also a public character to sustain and a public duty to discharge, and it behoves me therefore to satisfy your Majesty that the concession of my undoubted rights may be rendered perfectly consistent with sound policy and a just regard to the safety and permanence of the British rule in India. The largeness of the sum I have mentioned, considered by itself, -without any reference to the numerous regular, and increasing demands upon my exhausted treasury, might seem to indicate a wish to accumulate money for some concealed and hostile purpose : I utterly disavow every such object as alike dishonourable to the race from which



I have sprung and inconsistent with the open course which I have ever pursued. Some of my ancestors have fallen victims of the disloyalty of others, but they never betrayed those who confided in their honour, and in imitation of their noble examples, while I have not hesitated and will still continue to complain of the injustice I have suffered and vindicate the rights that belong to me, I will not disgrace them and myself by secret machinations against a Power which I dare not combat in the open field. As a complete security against any such attempt, I will cheerfully agree not to retain more than 12 lakhs of Rupees in my treasury at any one time, to invest the surplus, should there be any, in the loans opened by the British Government ; and to forfeit to the Honourable Company any sum found in my possession in excess of that amount not so invested. If any other check can be suggested which shall not subject me to a degrading inquisition in all the minutiae of my expenditure, I shall willingly accede to it.

15. But to a Prince of your Majesty's enlarged and magnanimous views it will be obvious that the most just and generous policy must also be the most wise and provident. For on what firmer bases can the duty and tranquillity of the subjects of a distant and conquered country be founded, or the confidence of surrounding States, naturally jealous of their independence, be established than on the irresistible evidence continually presented to them of good faith and moderation displayed in the strict observance of engagements even if burthensome and although spontaneously entered into with one bereft of the power of dictating terms or of effectually resenting their violation.

16. Should, on the other hand, a conspicuous example subsist of broken compact on the part of your Majesty's Vicegerents towards me, because no longer in a condition to vindicate my rights by an appeal to arms—if contempt and indignity be measured out to the representative of a once mighty monarchy in proportion as he is powerless to enforce respect, your Majesty's acquired subjects, once amongst those of my ancestors, now with anxious fears observing the conduct of their new rulers, the neighbouring Princes who have beheld

with alarm the progress of your Majesty's arms, nay the whole civilized world, will assuredly sympathize with my griefs and look on my oppressors with the feelings and wishes which their conduct must infallibly inspire.

17. If I had any doubt of the justice of my claims, I might still rest them on an appeal to your Majesty's known generosity. I might remind your Majesty of the time when my ancestors ruled supreme over these countries, where their wretched descendant and the sole representative of their dynasty is compelled to drag on a dependent existence in a dilapidated palace, exposed to the contempt or receiving the sympathy of the different classes of society, both Europeans and Asiatics, who resort to Dehlee, with means utterly inadequate to support the dignity even of a nominal sovereignty or to afford a scanty subsistence to the numerous branches of his family who look to him as their only stay. But I will not resort to such a plea. I will not condescend to accept, and your Majesty will disdain to confer, as a favour, that which is due as a right. I rest my cause on your Majesty's high-minded sense of honour and justice. I cannot permit myself to suppose that your Majesty will lend a deaf ear to my complaints. I address by this letter not only your Majesty but the world at large and I anticipate the plaudits which present and future ages will bestow on your Majesty's benevolent and enlightened sympathy with the unworthy representative of the once great and illustrious, though now fallen, House of Taimur.

18. To your Majesty what need I say more ?\*

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\* *Political Proceedings* 13-3-1829, No. 20. (Printed in Brajendranath Banerji's *Rajah Rammohun Roy's Mission to England* pp. 51-65, and J. K. Majumdar's *Rajah Rammohun Roy and the Last Moghuls* pp. 196-203. The letter was drafted by Rammohun both in English and Persian. The Persian version is not available to us.—*Editors.*)



## VI

### CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN RAMMOHUN ROY AND JEREMY BENTHAM.

#### A. Bentham to Rammohun Roy.

‘INTENSELY ADMIRER AND DEARLY BELOVED  
COLLABORATOR IN THE SERVICE OF MANKIND !

Your character is made known to me by our excellent friends, Colonel Young, Colonel Stanhope and Mr. Buckingham. Your works by a book in which I read, a style which but for the name of a Hindoo, I should have ascribed to the pen of a superiorly well-educated and instructed Englishman. A just-now published work of mine, which I send by favour of Mrs. Young, exhibits my view of the foundations of human belief, specially applied to the practice of this country in matters of law.

Now at the brink of the grave (for I want but a month or two of four score,) among the most delightful of my reflections, is the hope, I am notwithstanding feeding myself with, of rendering my labours of some considerable use to the hundred millions, or thereabouts, of whom I understand that part of your population which is under English governance or influence is composed.

With Mr. Mill's work on British India you can scarcely fail to be more or less acquainted. For these three or four and twenty years he has numbered himself among my disciples ; for upwards of twenty years he has been receiving my instructions ; for about the half of each of five years, he and his family have been my guests. If not adequately known already, his situation in the East India Company's service can be explained to you by Colonel Young. My papers on *Evidence*,—those papers which you now see in print,—were in his hands, and

5. Cumberland Terrace  
Regent's Park July 13<sup>th</sup> 1881

My dear and worthy Sir

I delayed answering your  
kind communication untill to-day  
in the expectation of hearing further  
from Dr. Bowring. By a note just  
received from him I find that  
there will be no excursion on  
Saturday or Sunday next. Dr. B.  
will have communicated all  
the particulars to you. I am  
sorry to observe that you were  
under an impression that I  
probably felt a reluctance to meet



Yours most faithfully  
Rammohun Roy

Henry Jonathan Lee

British Museum, London

read through by him, while occupied in his above-noticed great work ; a work from which more practically applicable information on the subject of government and policy may be derived (I think I can venture to say) than from any other as yet extant ; though as to style I wish I could, with truth and sincerity, pronounce it equal to yours.

For these many years a grand object of his ambition has been to provide for British India, in the room of the abominable existing system, a good system of judicial procedure, with a judicial establishment adequate to the administration of it ; and for the composition of it, his reliance has all along been, and continues to be, on me. What I have written on these subjects wants little of being complete ; so little that, were I to die to-morrow, there are those that would be able to put it in order and carry it through the press.

What he aims at above all things is,—the giving stability and security to landed property in the hands of the greatest number throughout British India ; and for this purpose, to ascertain by judicial inquiry, the state of the *customs* of the people in that respect. For this same purpose, a great *increase* in the number of *judicatories*, together with the *oral examination* of all parties concerned and a *recording* of the result will be absolutely necessary : the mode of proceeding as simple as possible, unexpensive and prompt, forming in these respects as complete a contrast as possible with the abominable system of the great Calcutta Judicatory : nations of unmixed blood and half-caste, both of whom could serve on moderate salaries, being, on my system, as much employed as possible.

Though but very lately known to your new Governor-General, Mr. Mill is in high favour with him ; and (I have reason to believe) will have a good deal of influence, which in that case, he will employ for the purpose above mentioned.

He has assured his lordship that there can be no penal judicature without an apt *prison* and prison-management ; and no apt prison or prison-management without the plan which we call the panopticon plan,—an account of which is in a work of mine, a copy of which, if I can find one, will accompany this letter. At any rate Colonel Young can explain it to you with the cause why it was not, five and thirty years ago, established



here ; and all the prisoners as well as all the paupers of England, put under my care : all the persons, being, at all times under the eye of the keepers, and the keepers, as well as they, under the eye of as many people as do not grudge the trouble of walking up a few steps for the purpose.

For I know not how many years—a dozen or fifteen perhaps—I have never paid a single visit to any body, except during about three months when a complaint I was troubled with forced me to bathing places, and at length to Paris. Thus it is that Lord William and I have never come together ; and now there is not time enough. Half-jest, half-earnest, Mr. Mill promised him a meeting with me on his return from India ; for old as I am, I am in good health and spirits, and have as yet lost but little of the very little strength I had in my youth. Though the *influence* of my writing is said to be something, of anything that can be called *power* I have not had any the least atom. I have some reason for expecting that, ere long, more or less use will be made of my work on Judicial Procedure by government here. But, from the influence possessed by Mr. Mill and the intense anxiety he has been manifesting for some years past for the completion of it, my hopes have in relation to your country been rather sanguine. Of the characters of it I cannot find to say anything, except that by the regard shown in it to the interests of the subject many, and by its simplicity, which I have endeavoured to maximise, I have little fear of its not recommending itself to your affections.

What regards the Judiciary Establishment, will form about half of the second of two volumes, a copy of the first of which ( with the exception of six introductory parts ) being already in print, is designed to form part of the contents of this packet.

While writing it has occurred to me to add a copy of a work called Panopticon ; the rather because, at the desire of Mr. Mill, it is in the hand of your new Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, to whom Mr. Mill has been recommending, and, as he flatters himself, not altogether without success, the erection of a place of confinement, upon the principles therein displayed. More than thirty years ago, but for a personal pique taken against me by the late king, George, the Third, all the

prisoners in the kingdom and all the paupers, would, under my care, have been provided for by me upon the same principle. To the Prime Minister of the time (from 1792 to 1802) with his colleagues, it was an object of enthusiastic and preserving admiration ; and not only was an act of the Legislature, which (you know) could not have been enacted without the king's consent, obtained for the purpose, but so much as related to the experimental prison carried into effect as the purchase of a large spot of ground for the purpose, and the greatest part put into my possession ; but when the last step came to be taken, George the Third could not be prevailed upon to take it ; and so the affair ended.

In my Codification Proposal, you will see letter for Del Valle of Guatemala alias Central America, in late Spanish America. He is the instructor of his country ; such an one as you of yours. I thus mention him to you. I shall mention you to him. Several papers he has sent me have made known to me his history, his occupations, and his designs. I hear him spoken of, from various quarters, as by far the most estimable man that late Spanish America has produced. If there be anything that you could like to transmit to him, it would be a sincere pleasure to me to receive it, and transmit it to him accordingly. Yours and his are kindred souls. Though in his country highest in estimation, it is still uncertain whether he is so in power, there being another man whose party is at war with that to which Del Valle wishes best ; but as far as I can learn, that of Del Valle is most likely to be ultimately prevailing.

Bowring with whom you have corresponded, is now living with me. He is the most intimate friend I have ; the most influential, as well as ardent man I know, in the endeavour at everything that is most serviceable to mankind.

Farewell, illustrious friend ! You may imagine from what is above, with what pleasure I should hear from you. Information from you might perhaps be made of use with reference to the above objects. But you should, in that case, send me two letters—one confidential, another ostensible. If I live seven days longer, I shall be fourscore. To make provision for the event of my death, you should do by your letters to me,



as Colonel Young has done by his : send it open, enclosed in one to Bowring.

We have high hopes of Lord William's good intentions : so much better than from so high an aristocratical family as his could have been expected.

I have been asking our common friends here, over and over again, for their assurance that there is some chance of your paying a visit to this strange country. I can get little better from them than a shake of the head.

P.S. Panopticon. Should this plan, and the reasoning, meet your approbation, you will see that none of the business as to which it is applicable, could be carried on well otherwise than by contract. What say you to the making singly or in conjunction with other enlightened philanthropists, an offer to Government for that purpose ? Professors of all religions might join in the contract ; and appropriate classification and separation for the persons under management : provision correspondent to their several religions, and their respective castes ; or other allocations under their respective religions. How it would delight me to see you and Colonel Young engaged in a partnership for a pupose of that sort !<sup>1</sup>

#### **B. Rammohun Roy to Jeremy Bentham.**

(1)

125, Regent Street  
May, 1st, 1831.

Dear and Respected Sir,

I was unable till this morning to read and answer your letter of the 26th ultimo. I return you my sincerest thanks for your kind and candid advice which I mean to follow to the utmost of my power during the present week. I am happy to say that I am already much better. I am grateful to my physicians for their successful attentions, and to you for interrupting your

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1. Reprinted from *The Works of Jeremy Bentham* edited by J. Bowring (Edinburgh 1838-1843) Vol X pp. 589-92.  
—Editors.

valuable public labours to second their admonitions. Against such authority rebellion would be unpardonable.

I have the pleasure to send you herewith Col. Young's letter ; also the four Papers which you kindly lent me to read. As soon as I am sufficiently recovered I shall not fail to benefit myself by your society. I remain with gratitude and respect.

Yours sincerely  
Rammohun Roy<sup>2</sup>

Jeremy Bentham Esq.

(2)

5, Cumberland Terrace  
Regent Park, July 13th 1831.

My dear and worthy Sir,

I delayed answering your kind communication untill (sic,) today in the expectation of hearing further from Dr. Bowring. By a note just received from him I find that there will be no excursion on Saturday or Sunday next. Dr. B. will have communicated all the particulars to you. I am sorry to observe that you were under an impression that I probably felt a reluctance to meet you. I hope you will excuse me when I say that in entertaining such a thought you did injustice to my feelings. Wishing you the enjoyment of uninterrupted health I remain

My dear sir  
Yours most faithfully  
Rammohun Roy<sup>3</sup>

Jeremy Bentham Esq.

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2. The letter was first published by Sj Brajendranath Banerji in the *Hindusthan Standard* Puja Number, 1939. It has since been reprinted in *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* ed. Nag and Burman, Part IV, p. 124.—*Editors*.

3. The original letter is in the British Museum London. (Cf. B. M. 33,546, f 50r.) A copy of it has been secured by Sj. Dilip Kumar Biswas. So far the three above letters exchanged by Rammohun and Bentham, have come to light. Possibly there are others which careful search might reveal.—*Editors*.



## VII

### RAMMOHUN ROY'S LETTER TO ROBERT DALE OWEN.

48 Bedford Square  
April 19th 1833

Dear Sir,

Not having been sufficiently fortunate yesterday to find you, or any of your friends at home I feel induced to make one or two remarks in writing to which, from what I have heard from you on Tuesday night, I think you will agree. They are as follows :—It is not necessary either in England or in America, to oppose Religion in promoting the Social domestic and political welfare of their Inhabitants particularly a system of Religion which inculcates the doctrine of Universal love and charity. Did such philanthropists as Locke or Newton oppose Religion? No! They rather tried to remove the perversions gradually introduced in Religions. Admitting for a moment that the Truth of the Divinity of Religion cannot be established to the satisfaction of a freethinker, but from an impartial enquiry, I presume we may feel persuaded to believe that a system of Religion (Christianity) which consists in love and charity is capable of furthering our happiness, facilitating our reciprocal transactions and curbing our obnoxious suspicions and feelings. I grieve to observe that by opposing Religion your most benevolent father has hitherto impeded his success. He, I seriously believe, is a follower of Christianity in the above sense though he is not aware of being so. Allow me to send Hamiltons (Hamilton's) East Indies (1st vol.) in which you will find page 35 line 36, that more than two thousand years ago wise and pious Brahmans of India entertained almost the same opinions which your father offers though they by no means were destitute of religion.

My desire to see you and your father crowned with success in your benevolent undertakings, has emboldened

me to make these observations, a freedom which I hope, you will, in consideration of my motives, excuse. With my best compliments to your father and kind regards to Mrs. Owen and Miss Owen. I remain with my best wishes for your success Dear Sir

Yours very faithfully,  
Rammohun Roy

P.S. I am now troubled with a strong attack of Influenza, which prevents me from sitting for a few minutes or writing a few lines. R. R.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Copy of the letter has been secured from the New York Public Library by Sj. Dilip Kumar Biswas whose attention was kindly drawn to it by Sj. Chanchal Sarkar.  
—Editors,



## VIII

### RAMMOHUN ROY'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LETTER

[The letter was first published by Mr. Sandford Arnot in the *Athenaeum*, October 5, 1833, after Rammohun's death. It is supposed to have been addressed by the Raja shortly before he left England for France, to his friend Mr. Gordon of Calcutta. Its authenticity was promptly challenged by Mr. John Hare in the *Times* October 28, 1833, p. 1, whereupon Arnot reasserted its genuineness in the November 23 issue of the same journal. Dr. Lant Carpenter however considers it a "valuable and interesting document," *A Review of the Labours, Opinions and Character of Rajah Rammohun Roy* p. 52, and apparently Mary Carpenter holds the same view, *The Last Days*, p. 22. Miss Collet definitely regarded the letter as spurious, Cf. above, p. 7n, without however adducing any argument in favour of her conclusion. Probably Prof. F. Max Müller comes nearest the truth when he remarks: "Whether the Rajah wrote or dictated the whole of it may be doubted but to reject the whole as a fabrication would be going much too far." *Biographical Essays* London, 1884, p. 45.—Editors.]

My Dear Friend,

In conformity with the wish you have frequently expressed, that I should give you an outline of my life, I have now the pleasure to give you the following very brief sketch.

My ancestors were Brahmins of a high order, and, from time immemorial, were devoted to the religious duties of their race, down to my fifth progenitor, who about one hundred and forty years ago gave up spiritual exercises for worldly pursuits and aggrandisement. His descendants ever since have followed his example, and according to the usual fate of courtiers, with various success, sometimes rising to

48. Bedford Square

April 19<sup>th</sup> 1833

Dear Sir,

Not having been sufficiently fortunate <sup>yesterday</sup> to find you, or any of your friends, at home, I feel induced to make one or two remarks in writing to which, from what I heard from you on Tuesday night, I think you will agree. They are as follows:- It is not necessary, either in England or in America, to oppose Religion in promoting the social, domestic and political welfare of their Inhabitants, particularly a system of Religion which inculcates the doctrine of universal Love and Charity. Did such Philanthropists as Locke & Newton oppose Religion? No! They rather tried to remove the perversion gradually introduced in Religions. Admitting for a moment that the Truths of the Divinity of Religion cannot be established to the satisfaction of a Freethinker; but from an impartial enquiry I presume we may feel persuaded to believe that a system of Religion (Christianity) which consists in Love and Charity is capable of furthering our happiness, facilitating our reciprocal transactions and curbing our obnoxious passions and feelings. I grieve to observe that by opposing Religion your most



benevolent Father has hitherto impeded his success. He, I firmly believe, is a follower of Christianity in the above sense though he is not aware of being so. Allow me to send Hamiltons East Indies (1<sup>st</sup> Vol.) in which you will find page 35 line 34, that more than two thousand years ago the wise and pious Brahmins of India entertained almost the same opinions which your Father now offers though they by no means were destitute of religion.

My desire to do <sup>you and</sup> your Father crowned with success in your benevolent undertakings has emboldened me to make these observations; a freedom which I hope you will, in consideration of my motives, excuse. With my best compliments to your Father and kind regards for Mrs Owen and Miss Owen I remain with my best wishes for your success Dear Sir.

Yours very faithfully  
Rammohun Roy

P.S. I am now troubled with a strong attack of Influenza, which prevents me from sitting for a few minutes or writing a few lines. R.R.

honour and sometimes falling; sometimes rich and sometimes poor; sometimes excelling in success, sometimes miserable through disappointment. But my maternal ancestors, being of the sacerdotal order by profession as well as by birth, and of a family than which none holds a higher rank in that profession, have up to the present day uniformly adhered to a life of religious observances and devotion, preferring peace and tranquillity of mind to the excitements of ambition, and all the allurements of worldly grandeur.

In conformity with the usage of my paternal race, and the wish of my father, I studied the Persian and Arabic languages,—these being indispensable to those who attached themselves to the courts of the Mahommedan princes, and agreeably to the usage of my maternal relations, I devoted myself to the study of the Sanscrit and the theological works written in it, which contain the body of Hindoo literature, law and religion.

When about the age of sixteen, I composed a manuscript calling in question the validity of the idolatrous system of the Hindoos. This, together with my known sentiments on that subject, having produced a coolness between me and my immediate kindred, I proceeded on my travels, and passed through different countries, chiefly within, but some beyond, the bounds of Hindoostan, with a feeling of great aversion to the establishment of the British power in India. When I had reached the age of twenty, my father recalled me, and restored me to his favour; after which I first saw and began to associate with Europeans, and soon after made myself tolerably acquainted with their laws and form of Government. Finding them generally more intelligent, more steady and moderate in their conduct, I gave up my prejudice against them and became inclined in their favour, feeling persuaded that their rule though a foreign yoke, would lead more speedily and surely to the amelioration of the native inhabitants; and I enjoyed the confidence of several of them even in their public capacity. My continued controversies with the Brahmins on the subject of their idolatry and superstition, and my interference with their custom of burning widows, and other pernicious practices, revived and increased their animosity against me; and through their influence with my family, my father was again



obliged to withdraw his countenance openly, though his limited pecuniary support was still continued to me.

After my father's death I opposed the advocates of idolatry with still greater boldness. Availing myself of the art of printing now established in India, I published various works and pamphlets against their errors, in the native and foreign languages. This raised such a feeling against me, that I was at last deserted by every person except two or three Scotch friends, to whom, and the nation to which they belong, I always feel grateful.

The ground which I took in all my controversies was, not that of opposition to Brahminism, but to a perversion of it; and I endeavoured to show that the idolatry of the Brahmins was contrary to the practice of their ancestors, and the principles of the ancient books and authorities, which they profess to revere and obey. Notwithstanding the violence of the opposition and resistance to my opinions, several highly respectable persons both among my own relations and others, began to adopt the same sentiments.

I now felt a strong wish to visit Europe, and obtain by personal observation, a more thorough insight into its manners, customs, religion, and political institutions. I refrained, however, from carrying this intention into effect until the friends who coincided in my sentiments should be increased in number and strength. My expectations having been at length realised, in November, 1830, I embarked for England, as the discussion of the East India Company's charter was expected to come on, by which the treatment of the natives of India, and its future government, would be determined for many years to come, and an appeal to the King in Council, against the abolition of the practice of burning widows, was to be heard before the Privy Council; and his Majesty the Emperor of Delhi had likewise commissioned me to bring before the authorities in England certain encroachments on his rights by the East India Company. I accordingly arrived in England in April, 1831.

I hope you will excuse the brevity of this sketch, as I have no leisure at present to enter into particulars, and

I remain, &c.,  
Rammohun Roy

## IX

### RAMMOHUN ROY'S CORRESPONDENCE ON THE EVE OF HIS VISIT TO FRANCE INCLUDING HIS LETTER TO THE FRENCH MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

#### A. Letters to T. Hyde Villiers Esq., Secretary to Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India.

(1)

Sir,

India having providentially been placed under the care of the Board of Control, I feel necessarily induced to have recourse to that authority when occasion requires. I, therefore, hope you will excuse the intrusion I make with the following lines.

I am informed that for the purpose of visiting France it is necessary to be provided with a passport and that before granting it, the French Ambassador must be furnished with an account of the applicant,

Such restrictions against foreigners are not observed even among the Nations of Asia ( China excepted ). However, their observance by France may perhaps be justified on the ground that she is surrounded by Governments entirely despotic on three sides and by nations kept down merely by the bayonet or by religious delusion.

In the event of my applying to Prince Talleyrand for a passport I beg to know whether I shall be justified in referring to you in your official capacity as to my character. All that I can say for myself is, that I am a traveller and that my heart is with the French People in their endeavours to support the cause of liberal principles.



Sir Francis Burdett, at Mr. Byng's, liberally and spontaneously offered to give me a letter of introduction to General Lafayette, but this will not, I think, serve my purpose on my first landing in France.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,

Your most obedient servant,  
Rammohun Roy.

London,  
48, Bedford Sq.,  
December 22nd, 1831.

(2)

Sir,

I have the honour to receive your letter of the 27th instant and I beg to offer my warm acknowledgments to the Board for their attention to my application of the 23rd of this month.

I beg to be permitted to add that, as I intimated to the Board my intention of eventually applying to the French Ambassador resident in London for a passport for France, I now deem it proper to submit to you for the information of the Board a copy of an intended communication from me to the Foreign Minister of France, the result of which I shall await before I apply to the French Ambassador.

Unless I have the honour to hear from you that such an address would be irregular and unconstitutional, I shall forward it to a friend in Paris to be presented in due form.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,

Your most obedient servant,  
Rammohun Roy.

London,  
December 20th, 1831.

(Endorsed).

28th December, 1831.

Raja Rammohun Roy.

Transg., copy of an intended communication to the Foreign Minister of France.

Private note from Mr. Villiers to Rammohun Roy, January, 4, 1832.

**B. Letter to Prince Talleyrand, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, France.**

To

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, Paris.

Sir,

You may be surprised at receiving a letter from a Foreigner, the Native of a country situated many thousand miles from France, and I assuredly would not now have trespassed on your attention, were I not induced by a sense of what I consider due to myself and by the respect I feel towards a country standing in the foremost rank of free and civilized nations.

2nd. For twelve years past I have entertained a wish (as noticed, I think, in several French and English periodicals) to visit a country so favoured by nature and so richly adorned by the cultivation of arts and sciences, and above all blessed by the possession of a free constitution. After surmounting many difficulties interposed by religious and national distinctions and other circumstances, I am at last opposite your coast, where, however, I am informed that I must not place my foot on your territory unless I previously solicit and obtain an express permission for my entrance from the Ambassador or Minister of France in England.

3rd. Such a regulation is quite unknown even among the Nations of Asia (though extremely hostile to each other from religious prejudices and political dissensions), with the exception of China, a country noted for its extreme jealousy of foreigners and apprehensions of the introduction of new customs and ideas. I am, therefore, quite at a loss to conceive how it should exist among a people so famed as the French are for courtesy and liberality in all other matters.

4th. It is now generally admitted that not religion only but unbiassed common sense as well as the accurate deduc-



tions of scientific research lead to the conclusion that all mankind are one great family of which numerous nations and tribes existing are only various branches. Hence enlightened men in all countries must feel a wish to encourage and facilitate human intercourse in every manner by removing as far as possible all impediments to it in order to promote the reciprocal advantage and enjoyment of the whole human race.

5th. It may perhaps be urged that during the existence of war and hostile feelings between any two nations (arising probably from their not understanding their real interests), policy requires of them to adopt those precautions against each other. This, however, only applies to a state of warfare. If France, therefore, were at war with surrounding nations or regarded their people as dangerous, the motive for such an extraordinary precaution might have been conceived.

6th. But as a general peace has existed in Europe for many years, and there is more particularly so harmonious an understanding between the people of France and England and even between their present Governments, I am utterly at a loss to discover the cause of a regulation which manifests, to say the least, a want of cordiality and confidence on the part of France.

7th. Even during peace the following excuses might perhaps be offered for the continuance of such restrictions, though in my humble opinion they cannot stand a fair examination.

First: If it be said that persons of bad character should not be allowed to enter France : still it might I presume, be answered that the granting of passports by the French Ambassador here is not usually founded on certificates of character or investigation into the conduct of individuals. Therefore, 't does not provide a remedy for that supposed evil.

Secondly: If it be intended to prevent felons escaping from justice: this case seems well-provided for by the treaties between different nations for the surrender of all criminals.

Thirdly: If it be meant to obstruct the flight of debtors from their creditors: in this respect likewise it appears

superfluous, as the bankrupt laws themselves after a short imprisonment set the debtor free even in his own country; therefore, voluntary exile from his own country would be, I conceive, a greater punishment.

Fourthly: If it be intended to apply to political matters, it is in the first place not applicable to my case. But on general grounds I beg to observe that it appears to me, the ends of constitutional Government might be better attained by submitting every matter of political difference between two countries to a Congress composed of an equal number from the parliament of each; the decision of the majority to be acquiesced in by both nations and the Chairman to be chosen by each Nation alternately, for one year, and the place of meeting to be one year within the limits of one country and next within those of the other; such as at Dover and Calais for England and France.

8th. By such a Congress all matters of difference., whether political or commercial, affecting the Natives of any two civilized countries with constitutional Governments, might be settled amicably and justly to the satisfaction of both and profound peace and friendly feelings might be preserved between them from generation to generation.

9th. I do not dwell on the inconvenience which the system of passports imposes in urgent matters of business and in cases of domestic affliction. But I may be permitted to observe that the mere circumstance of applying for passport seems a tacit admission that the character of the applicant stands in need of such a certificate or testimonial before he can be permitted to pass unquestioned. Therefore, any one may feel some delicacy in exposing himself to the possibility of refusal which would lead to an inference unfavourable to his character as a peaceable citizen.

My desire, however, to visit that country is so great that I shall conform to such conditions as are imposed on me, if the French Government, after taking the subject into consideration, judge it proper and expedient to continue restrictions, contrived for a different state of things, but to which



they may have become reconciled by long habit; as I should be sorry to set up my opinion against that of the present enlightened Government of France.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,  
Your most obedient servant,  
Rammohun Roy\*

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\*The three above letters were unearthed by the late Brajendranath Banerji from the old State Records preserved in the India Office Library, London.—*Editors*.

## X

### DOCUMENT FROM MADRAS RECORD OFFICE DESCRIBING THE REACTION OF CERTAIN INHABITANTS OF BERHAMPUR (GANJAM) TO RAMMOHUN ROY'S RELIGIOUS VIEWS.

#### PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

*General No. 596 (Pages 4051-4060).*

*Cons. No.1. dated 2nd December, 1831.*

The petition is from Chavoor Sooreanarrain Row and the inhabitants of Berhampore in the Ganjam District of Madras Presidency.<sup>1</sup> The petition was submitted to the Governor in Council of Fort St. George with a request to forward it to the Board of Control in London. The petition falls into three Sections.

Ist part opposes the prayer of East Indians that the members of the community should be appointed as District Munsifs and Judges, and that they should not be subject to the Hindu and Muhammadan Law.

IInd part denounces Raja Ram Mohun Roy, who is neither a Christian nor a Mohammadan, nor a Hindu.

IIIrd part advocates the judicious selection of the natives to assist in the administration of Justice.

The following extract from the petition dealing with Raja Ram Mohun Roy is of immense interest as it embodies a contemporary estimate of his character and activities :—

“In the case of Rammohun Roy, how intelligent and man of talents he may be, yet from his late profession of belief in one God, in an irregular course, forsaking all religious rites, and ordinances of his caste, as a Brahmin, he is not accounted for among any regulated class of religions. He is neither a Christian, a Mohammaden, or a Hindu, but a free thinking man, abandoned by all religions, and from this very reason the

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1. The district of Ganjam is now in Orissa.—*Editors.*



Hindoos cannot in any shape benefit from the exertions of his talents in their law courts, as a Juror, or as any Description of Law Officer in his present situation, as he is more an unfit thumb-screw of the Gates of all religions than a well work founder of the Madas (*sic*)<sup>2</sup> of course such cannot be entitled to judge Hindoos. In as many tracts as he wrote he used to quote such chapters of the Madas (*sic*) and Poorans, which only treat of one God, saying, that they are verily true and that he follows them, taking care in the mean-time to omit cunningly the rest of the contents of the self-same Vedas, and Pooranas. From this it is doubtful how far he did trust in the Vedas and how far not. If the Book is fictitious, the whole compendium must be the same. When he does not believe in one part of it, he cannot believe in the rest. The truth is that he is a mere caviller with, or a blasphemer of the holy Vedas, after all he has pretended to have followed them convinced the latter of their meaning. Had it been his sole pride, he is certainly very much erred in his ideas and led himself astray. Now, by this bold attack upon the doctrines to which Rammohun Roy sticks, your Petitioners never intended to deny the mighty attributes of the God, but to urge that he has not pursued a right course of acquiring their knowledge in the mode enjoined by the Vedas for, they are meant to say that the almighty is of dual qualities i. e. material, and unmaterial, if otherwise his shapelessness can produce no action towards the fulfilment of his holy functions. What can it be expected then, from a blank space, hence when any one action of the almighty is admitted, such as creation or destruction, some kind of his shape should be forthwith acknowledged as to his unmaterial state, it must be equally indispensable for him, for he is omnipresent, and all in all, if not so, he must have been absent at the void space between Earth and Heaven. It is further declared in favour of his material quality that his immateriality is in one point an allegory of expression, intended to declare his infinite greatness for instance, one may say that French ladies are very handsome without limitting their beauty, yet it is not beyond the power of an artist to draw out their portrait, so as long as the actions

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2. Apparently a mistake for 'Vedas'.—Editors.

of the God are admissible, his material being is likewise traceable and visitable by one deservedly seek for it, or else this whole universe ought to have been produced from accident. When such are the interpretations of the Vedas, Mr. Ram-mohun Roy cannot acknowledge one quality of the almighty and reject the other, as long as he calls himself one of the followers of the Vedas. With respect to the rites and ceremonies which he has forsaken, your Petitioners humbly beg to state that they are also necessary in a religion, until one may gain a gradual knowledge of the duty, when, this attention to the rites and ceremonies will be proportionately shaken off themselves, just as a letter-writer who cares little of his schooling task of repeating alphabet, and syllabelating them, though it was at first indispensable for him to do so, and also as a fruit which requires flower at first for its progeny, and then throw it off from the ring of its cup immediately after the kernal begin forming it shell. Here, your Petitioners believe the Christian theologists may also agree with them regarding the necessary of performing these, because many of their clergymen with whom your first Petitioner had severally conferred said to him that they are their Precepts provided for in the holy scriptures, when he enquired from them, why they administer baptism, take Lords Supper, however automatically commuting wine and bread for Christ's blood on the Sabbath day, and the Christmas day. Besides this in the month of August 1827, the 1st of your Petitioners ran up from Ganjam to Calcutta on Dawk to see this person Ram-mohun Roy and to ascertain the religion he followed, but to his extreme regret found that his religion is no religion and his laws are no laws, but a Conglomeration of all stitched into a singular one".<sup>3</sup>

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3. This interesting document written not always in perfect English, has been kindly forwarded to us by Dr. Nilmani Mukhejee, Lecturer in History, University of Calcutta.  
—Editors.



## XI

### SOPHIA DOBSON COLLET

#### *A Biographical Sketch\**

Since its foundation, the Brahmo Samaj, the Theistic Church of modern India, has attracted the warm admiration and enthusiastic devotion of a few large-hearted Europeans—men and women. One of the most remarkable among these was the late Miss Spohia Dobson Collet. Her connection with the Brahmo Samaj was almost of the nature of a romance. Impressed by the magnetic personality of the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, whom she had seen in South Place Chapel, London, when she must have been a girl of ten or eleven, she remained a most loyal and devoted supporter of his church throughout life. Though not in complete agreement with the tenets of the new movement, she was ever vigilant in her solicitude and unwearied in her exertions for its advancement. No member, not even a devoted missionary, could have worked harder for, or watched with warmer interest, the progress of the infant church. A life-long invalid, ailing constantly from many bodily infirmities, she procured and preserved, from a distance of many thousand miles, every bit of information about Brahmos and the Brahmo Samaj which was unknown even to workers on the spot. To be able to read the publications concerning the new church, she, late in life, learnt the Bengali language. Her information about the Brahmo Samaj was wonderful in every way. It is not too much to say that she was the greatest authority on the contemporary history of this movement. She carried on extensive correspondence with many Brahmos. It is a pity that her letters have not been

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\*This life-sketch is by the late Hemchandra Sarkar. It was originally prefixed by the writer to the second edition of Miss Collet's *Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy* published in 1913. It is reprinted here in an abridged form.  
—Editors.

preserved and no record of her life has been published by those who knew her personally. To her the Brahmo Samaj owes, indeed a deep debt of gratitude unspeakable, and by this community her memory should ever be cherished with love and esteem....

Sophia Dobson Collet was born on the 2nd Feb. 1822 in a Unitarian family of London long connected with India. Her great grand-uncle Joseph Collet, was Governor of Fort St. George ( Madras ) for about two years from 1719. The family has still in its possession a curious model about two feet high, of Governor Collet in court-dress, which was made in India after the original and sent home to his brother, Samuel, from whom Miss Collet was descended. Her mother's brother, Captain Collet Barber also was in the service of the East India Company.

Miss Collet's father was a merchant. He died when she was but four years of age. Owing to an accident to her mother sometime earlier Miss Collet was an invalid from her birth, being afflicted with curvature of the spine. On account of her physical defects she seemed not to have been sent to school, but was carefully educated at home, principally by her mother's sister, Miss Mary Barber, a lady of remarkable sweetness and nobility of character and of eminent culture....

The family connections with India might have had something to do with Miss Collet's interest in the Brahmo Samaj. But the great impetus came when she saw Raja Rammohun Roy in South Place Chapel, London. Though then only a girl of tender age, she must have been greatly impressed, for throughout her life she retained a warm attachment for the Raja, whom she always used to call "Rammohun". In her later life she was most anxious to bring out a Life of the Raja. She often used to say to friends that her one desire was to live long enough to complete her book about Rammohun. How strong that desire was is evident from the note of the gentleman<sup>1</sup> who, at her earnest dying request, completed the work. Miss Collet wrote to him "I am dying. I cannot finish my 'Life of Rammohun Roy'. But when I

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1. Rev. F. Herbert Stead.—*Editors.*



enter the Unseen, I want to be able to tell Rammohun that his Life will be finished. Will you finish it for me ?”<sup>2</sup>

The little girl of ten never forgot Rammohun or lost sight of his work. Quietly she kept watching and collecting every detail of information about the Samaj, which the Master had founded before leaving his beloved land to die in England.

Her earliest writing about the Brahmo Samaj that we have been able to trace was a letter in the *British Quarterly Review* for July 1869 refuting certain allegations against Keshub Chandra Sen. By this time she had put herself in communication with the rising leader of the progressive section of the Brahmo Samaj, for whom she entertained great admiration and regard until the Cooch Behar marriage brought about an unfortunate revulsion of feeling.

The *British Quarterly Review* for April 1869 published an article on the “Brahmo Samaj (or Theistic Church) of India”, tracing its growth from its origin in 1830 under Rammohun Roy down to its latest phase under the influence of Keshub Chandra Sen. In this article, in spite of a general fairness of tone, the reviewer concluded by making the following grave charge against Keshub : “Like Chaitanya and other great teachers of Hinduism, Keshub Chandra Sen permits the more degraded of his followers to prostrate themselves before him and worship him.” Miss Collet at once wrote a letter to the editor contradicting the charge against Mr. Sen, whom she called her friend. She also wrote to the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Inquirer*, the *Unitarian Herald* and other papers to remove the false impression so created.

To vindicate the position of Keshub Chandra Sen more fully and to give the English public a correct idea of the Brahmo Samaj, Miss Collet contributed an article to the *Contemporary Review* of Feb., 1870 under the title of “Indian Theism and its Relation to Christianity.” With reference to it the *Illustrated London News* wrote : “The *Contemporary Review* is better than it has been for a long time. The most interesting paper is Miss Collet’s excellent account of the

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2. Cf. Continuator’s note, above.—Editors.

Hindu religious reformers, the Brahmo Samaj." The *Spectator* similarly observed: "This number (of the *Contemporary Review*) is more than usually varied and interesting. The most noticeable article is Miss Collet's Essay on Indian Theism and its relation to Christianity, reviewing the present position of a movement which has been well-known for the last forty years as the Brahmo Samaj." In this article Miss Collet gave a full and clear account of the Brahmo Samaj from its foundation by Raja Rammohun Roy, through its development under Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore, down to its then recent activities under Keshub Chandra Sen. The name of the Brahmo Samaj was not quite unknown in England. Miss Cobbe had previously sketched the rise and progress of the Brahmo Samaj down to 1866; and Miss Carpenter had also recently added some new details to the stock of popular information on the subject. But the true nature and power of the Brahmo Samaj, were never "traced out so clearly," (thus *Allen's Indian Mail* remarked) "as in Miss Collet's paper". It created a great interest in the new religious movement of India among the more enlightened British public. The article was reproduced and commented upon widely in the British Press. As one main object of Miss Collet in writing the paper was to vindicate the position of Keshub Chandra Sen, who had been accused first of being a Christian at heart and subsequently of recanting his Christian confession, a large part of it was devoted to explaining the real position of Mr. Sen. These accusations were based on two lectures which he had recently delivered on "Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia" and on "Great Men" within an interval of about six months. Miss Collet, though avowedly a Christian who nursed, at this period, a faint hope that Keshub might yet accept Christianity, showed from the utterances of the Brahmo leader that there was no inconsistency in his position. An English contemporary, in reviewing the article, wrote: "Her avowed sympathy with the popular Christianity does not blind her to the real worth of its young Indian rival, or tempt her to mistake the fables of prejudiced opponents for truthful pictures of the Church established by Rammohun Roy, and largely renewed by Keshub Chandra Sen. In her



essay there is none of the small unfairness to a rival worship which led the writer in the *British Quarterly Review* to accept the scandals lately circulated against the present leader of young India's revolt from Brahmanism. The Eastern tendency to hyperbole in jesture as well as speech gave Keshub Chandra Sen's enemies a seeming handle for accusing him of letting his disciples offer him divine honours, while the homage invariably paid by him to the human excellences of the Christian redeemer roused the bitter resentment of those Brahmoists who saw in it a concession to the believers in a triune Godhead. At one moment he was accused of being an orthodox Christian ; and then because another of his lectures referred to Christ as but one of many prophets, his Christian critics charged him with cowardly recantation of his former sentiments. Miss Collet however has the good sense to see how little his various utterances contradict each other, and how entirely they all belie the notion of his seeking to set himself up as a superhuman mouthpiece of the God he worships. She has the honesty to interpret the Brahmoist leader by himself, instead of taking the cue from others, or from isolated passages in Keshub Chandra Sen's writings. His lecture on Great Men, as she truly observes, supplemented the argument of his previous lecture on Jesus Christ. From the two thus taken together, it is easy to see how naturally such a man might hold up Jesus as the great bond of connection between East and West, the highest model of human holiness and purity, 'the greatest and truest benefactor of mankind', without for a moment pledging himself to any one article of the Trinitarian theology, or forgetting his own doctrine that 'every man is, in some measure, an incarnation of the divine spirit'." It will thus be seen that Miss Collet was entirely successful in her object of vindicating the position of Keshub Chandra Sen. She concluded her advocacy of the Brahmo Samaj with the following fervent appeal to the British public : "They thirst after the 'One God without a second', the uncreated Father of spirits, and long to sweep away all that may seem to obscure His perfect light. Now this is surely a right instinct, and the indispensable foundation of all religion that deserves the



XV Sophia Dobson Collet





name. It should also be remembered that in God's 'education of the world,' every lesson has to be mastered separately. It took the Hebrews some centuries to learn their pure Theism, and only when that was for ever rooted in the heart of the race, was the eternal son revealed. It is possible that some such process may be in store for India, where the Gospel has hitherto taken so little hold of native minds as to suggest the idea that some hidden link needs to be supplied between it and them. If so, such preparation is certainly beginning, however unconsciously under the Brahmo Samaj. Whatever their imperfections they are doing a work for God which greatly needs doing and which He will surely 'lead into all truth' in his own time and in his own way. Let us not then, refuse our Christian sympathies to these Hindu Unitarians, as fellow-worshippers of our common Father, fellow-learners of the teaching of His Son, fellow-seekers of the kingdom of Heaven..."

With her characteristic thoroughness she republished the article of the *Contemporary Review* in pamphlet form with some additions and alterations. The *Spectator* of London, in the course of a sympathetic review, characterised it as a "most able and interesting account of the religious tendencies of the movement." Keshub Chandra Sen's visit to England, of course, made Miss Collet very glad of the opportunity of closer association with her friend. She prepared the ground for him beforehand and insured the success of his visit by awakening the interest of the British public in the Brahmo Samaj. Throughout the period of his sojourn in England, she worked strenuously and incessantly for making the visit productive of the best results. Indeed, much of the success of Mr. Sen's English visit and the warm reception accorded to him was due to the efforts of Miss Collet. She followed up her writings in the newspapers by preparing a volume of Mr. Sen's lectures. *Allen's Indian Mail* of March 29, 1870, contained the following announcement: "We are glad to learn that the interest lately shown by the English public in the progress of the sect which now owns him (Keshub Chandra Sen) as its chief leader is about to be gratified by the publication of some of the Baboo's lectures, including those on 'Christ', 'Great



Men' and 'Regenerating Faith,' all of them delivered in the last three or four years. These have already been printed in Calcutta, where the preacher's eloquence and breadth of charity have been appreciated even by those who disliked or distrusted his theology. Miss Collet, the editor, who has already thrown much light on the character of the new Theistic movement in India, also proposes, we believe, to accompany the lectures with a historical sketch of the Brahmo Samaj from the materials furnished by Mr. Sen himself.' The volume, which was named *The Brahmo Samaj*, was published by Allen & Co. In addition to the lectures already mentioned, it contained also the lecture on "The Future Church." Later on, Miss Collet prepared another edition of it with the addition of some tracts, sermons and prayers of Mr. Sen. In fact, she took every possible measure to bring Mr. Sen and his utterances to the general notice of the British public.

Keshub Chandra Sen arrived in London in March and received a very cordial welcome. But there were some people who tried their utmost to belittle him and his work. They communicated to the press every little gossip that they could catch hold of, likely to discredit Mr. Sen in the public eye. With reference to these, the *Daily News* tactfully remarked : "Our Hindu visitor Chunder Sen was doubtless aware when he came before the British public that, if he received the most cordial of welcomes, he would also be subjected to unsparing criticisms. Accordingly the festival at the Hanover Square Rooms has been succeeded by letters in our own and other Journals, in which the Hindu reformer's mission and declarations are discussed with all the freedom that can be desired." Miss Collet took upon herself the task of guarding the reputation of her friend against these free lances of the Press. . .

In the midst of such unpleasant and vexatious controversies, she however continued her more serious literary work on behalf of the Brahmo Samaj. Her volume of Keshub Chandra Sen's lectures being well received by the English public she prepared, before the end of the year 1870, another edition of it with the addition of some sermons and prayers. In reviewing this book, the *Glasgow Herald* (January 12, 1871) announced the preparation of a history of the Brahmo Samaj by Miss Collet.

“Miss Collet”, wrote the Glasgow paper, “by whom this volume is edited and who has done much already to acquaint us with Indian Theism, has in preparation a History of the Brahmo Samaj, which we are sure will be looked for with much interest, especially by the readers of Keshub Chandra Sen’s Lectures and Tracts.”

Shortly afterwards, Miss Collet brought out another book under the title of *Keshub Chandra Sen’s English Visit*. It was a volume of more than six hundred pages filled with reports of various public meetings which Mr. Sen had attended during his English visit and the sermons and addresses delivered by him on those occasions. It was a work involving great labour ; and it is surprising how Miss Collet with her infirmities could accomplish it. But for her careful compilation much of these materials would have been lost. In reviewing it, the *Spectator* ( March 25, 1871 ) wrote : “The indefatigable pen by whose instrumentality mainly Keshub Chandra Sen and his great Theistic movemant in India have been introduced to the literary notice of the English public, has here been employed, chiefly we imagine for the benefit of the great Hindoo Missonary’s native followers, in preparing a tolerably complete record of his English visit, and all the more important receptions and addresses by which it was signalised. This volume will, no doubt, be read with great interest and gratification by those adherents of the Brahmo Samaj,—and they are not few,—who can read English and it will indeed be to them a valuable testimony to the genuine sympathy felt with them in England.”

The interest awakened in England by the visit of Keshub Chandra Sen led to the formation of a committee for rendering aid to the Brahmo Samaj. A meeting was held in London for the purpose on the 21st July, 1871. Miss Collet was one of the leading organisers. The meeting resolved that their “first efforts should be to raise sufficient money for the purchase of an organ for Mr. Sen’s church in Calcutta, and do this at once as a beginning, so that at the great gathering in Calcutta in January 1872 this organ might be played, and so join all voices in one harmony.” The result was the organ which is still in use at the Bharatvarshiya Brahma Mandir in Calcutta.



By this time the Brahmo Samaj was in the full swing of the controversy regarding the Brahmo Marriage Bill. The measure met with the successive opposition of the orthodox Hindus and the members of the Adi Brahmo Samaj. Miss Collet, with her characteristic energy, threw herself on the side of the progressive Brahmos. She advised and encouraged the Indians in England to send up a memorial in support of the Bill, and herself wrote in the newspapers to remove misconceptions. *Allen's Indian Mail*, which in those days was an influential journal about Indian questions, remarked thus in one of its issues: "It is evident that the provisions of the Bill must be modified, so as to ensure the older Brahmos perfect freedom to marry in their own way; and the title and preamble of the Bill must be so altered as to leave them no fair ground for complaint." In reply to this, Miss Collet wrote (September 26, 1871): "If you examine the Bill, you find that it does not in any respect interfere with the freedom of the older Brahmos to marry in their own way. The preamble states:—'Whereas it is expedient to legalise marriages between the members of the sect called the Brahmo Samaj, when solemnised according to the provisions of this Act &c. thus leaving the question entirely open whether marriages between Brahmos solemnised in other ways require legislation or not.'"

With her usual thoroughness, Miss Collet prepared and published a pamphlet on *Brahmo Marriages, their past history and present position* indicating the difficulties of the progressive Brahmos. The *Spectator* thus reviewed the pamphlet: "The author explains very clearly the difference between the old idolatrous marriages and those which the Indian Theists have celebrated and the doubts which have arisen as to the legal validity of the latter. She shows how difficult it was to remedy the mischief without bitterly alarming native public opinion—how any remedy which only required persons anxious to enter into a valid marriage without idolatrous rites, to *disclaim* adherence to the orthodox religious systems of India, would have the effect of subverting caste, because not compelling those who made such a disclaimer to regard themselves wholly outcasts from Hindu Society. On the other hand, the

proposal to legalise only the marriages of persons who should declare themselves adherents of the Brahmo faith, alarmed the old school of conservative Brahmos, who profess to believe their marriages (though not idolatrous) quite legal, and who fear greatly any wider breach between themselves and Hinduism. On the whole subject Miss Collet passes a very clear judgment and shows herself altogether much more mistress of the question than the writer who not long ago discussed it, not too liberally in the *Pall Mall Gazette*." *The Indian Mirror* (Oct. 26, 1871) wrote: "Among the pamphlets we have received by the last mail is one entitled *Brahmo Marriages: their past history and present position* by Miss S. D. Collet. It is gratifying to find that the able author, whose name is quite familiar to our readers, has taken up the most important topic of the day in India and treated it in so exhaustive and convincing a manner as is most likely to influence public opinion in England. The pamphlet exhibits an amount of research which is truly remarkable." This pamphlet, the narrative portion of which was subsequently embodied by Miss Collet in her *Brahmo Year-Book* for 1879, remains the clearest and fullest history of that exceedingly interesting episode in the reform movement of modern India viz., emancipation from the tyranny of caste and priesthood in matters of matrimony. It records how, step by step, the present law regulating reform marriages came to be enacted.

Now we pass on to a more elaborate and sustained effort on the part of Miss Collet to present the work and activities of the Brahmo Samaj to the public. This was her compilation of the *Brahmo Year-Book* which came out year after year for seven years from 1876 to 1882. Considering the fact that the compiler was not herself a member of the community, nor had she any direct personal acquaintance with the churches the minutest details of the work and organisation of which she undertook to chronicle from a distance of many thousand miles, the work must be pronounced a marvellous monument of labour and the power of keeping accurate information. The seven volumes of Miss Collet's *Brahmo Year-Book* are together a store-house of information about the Brahmo Samaj during a most important epoch in its history. They include the period



of the zenith of Keshub Chandra Sen's ascendancy in the Brahmo Samaj, immediately preceding the Cooch Behar marriage and the troubled times that followed until the practical conclusion of the disastrous agitation. When Miss Collet commenced the work, she had no idea of the coming catastrophe. Her object in undertaking the compilation has been told in the preface to the first volume : "The Brahmo Samaj or Theistic Church of India is an experiment hitherto unique in religious history. It has been received with warm sympathy by some observers, with suspicion and dislike by others ; but very little is generally known of its actual condition or principles beyond what may be gleaned from the speeches and writings of a few of its leaders who have visited England ; consequently, the most absurd misapprehensions exist on the subject in many quarters. The object of the present publication is to supply periodically recent and reliable information on the chief representative features of this Church, so interesting alike to the practical Christian and religious philosopher." It will thus be seen that the main object of Miss Collet was to enlighten the British public about the Brahmo Samaj. But the *Brahmo Year-Book* must have been not much less illuminating to the Indian reader and even to Brahmos themselves. For, Miss Collet, with a marvellous patience and perseverance, collected and set forth every scrap of information regarding even the smallest Brahmo congregations and institutions scattered throughout the length and breadth of India, the existence of many of which had not been known to Brahmos themselves in other parts of the country, so that Miss Collet's publications came as a revelation to contemporary Brahmos ; and to succeeding generations of Brahmos they will always be a most valuable and interesting record of their church at a very critical epoch. The work must have involved an enormous amount of correspondence and a very careful reading of the periodicals and publications of and about the Brahmo Samaj ; and it is a wonder how Miss Collet, with her chronic ill-health, could manage it in the way she did. The arduousness of her labours will be understood from the fact that no one could continue the work after she had been compelled to give it up on account of increasing infirmities,

though repeated efforts were made by persons in actual contact with the work of the Brahmo Samaj.

The series begins with the year 1876. The first volume opened with a general introduction giving a brief sketch of the history of the Brahmo Samaj from its foundation and an account of its ideals and existing organisation. Then followed a general survey of the Brahmo Samajes and their work with a complete list of Theistic congregations in India and a detailed account of the more important among them. The next volume was prepared on the same plan, with the addition of an account of Brahmo literature and of new developments in the Samaj. But soon after the publication of the second volume, the Brahmo Samaj was swept over by the whirlwind of the Cooch Behar marriage controversy, and necessarily the greater part of the third volume was occupied with it. The incident proved a great shock to Miss Collet. We have seen with what warm admiration she regarded Keshub Chandra Sen at first and how zealously she defended him against attacks in the press. The change from that feeling must have been most painful. In after life she used to call it her greatest "idol-breaking." But her interest in the Brahmo Samaj did not diminish with her disappointment in Keshub Chandra Sen. Even in the darkest days of that trouble, she did not lose her faith in the Brahmo Samaj. With the most anxious solicitude she watched the progress of the schism and chronicled it year after year with the utmost scrupulousness and marvellous insight. She did not thrust her own opinion on the readers, but in disputed matters gave the versions of both the parties, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusion. The *Brahmo Year-Book* for 1878 will remain as the fullest source for the history of the second schism in the Brahmo Samaj.

With the gradual subsidence of the agitation points at issue could be more clearly seen and the resulting situation better understood. Miss Collet did not share the popular European notion that with the break-up of the power of Keshub Chandra Sen the Brahmo Samaj had suffered a total ship-wreck. But she had the insight to see a renewed vitality of the Brahmo Samaj in this momentous struggle for principle. Miss Collet watched with great satisfaction the gradual development of the



Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. In the preface of the *Year-Book* for 1880, she writes : "Now it is perfectly clear that the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj have fairly entered upon this constitutional course, and are really acquiring habits of mutual help and combined action which have already accomplished excellent practical results and are in themselves a most wholesome discipline." She could now look upon the future of her favourite Theistic movement in India with hope and assurance. She quoted with hearty approval the judgment of Count Goblet d'Alveila that the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj "appears to be henceforth unquestionably called to take the direction of the movement which the church of Keshub seems to have lost beyond recall."

In the volumes for 1880 and 1881 Miss Collet gives detailed accounts of the development of Mr. Sen's views in his later life leading to the adoption of the name 'New Dispensation.' Bhai Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, the Asst. Secretary of the Brahmo Samaj of India, criticised some of the statements in the volume for 1880. To this Miss Collet replied in the volume for 1881 ; and she substantiated her statements by quotations from the authoritative publications of the Brahmo Samaj. At the same time, where she had been wrong, she frankly admitted and apologised for her misstatements. As a historian, Miss Collet was scrupulously fair and impartial, and her aptitude and passion for collecting facts marvellous. Many Samajes bore testimony to the accuracy of her statements and passed resolutions conveying their gratitude to her for her self-imposed, disinterested labours in compiling the *Brahmo Year-Book*. It is much to be regretted that she did not write a complete History of the Brahmo Samaj which the *Glasgow Herald* had announced in 1871 that she had been preparing. The reason for the non-fulfilment of this project was her extreme scrupulousness as a historian. She would not write a single sentence for which she had not unquestionable authority. But though she did not herself write a History of the Brahmo Samaj, it is to her initiative that we owe Pandit Sivanath Sastri's two volumes on the subject. For, she it was who induced Pandit Sastri during his visit to England to write a complete *History of the Brahmo Samaj*.

33 Hamilton Road  
Wigbury Park London. W.

July 7 / 92

To Behn Rikhi Lal Das Hildai.

Dear Sir,

For some time I have been endeavouring to collect materials with which to compile a Life of the Rajah Rani Mohan Raj. One of the chief sources of information which I have been seeking is that collection of Manuscripts which has certainly existed in the possession of the Hare family in Bedford Square. With much trouble, I at last succeeded in discovering Miss Janet Hare, who nursed the Rajah in his last illness. (as she now lives near Southampton.)



But she knows nothing at all about  
these MSS. & has never heard of any  
being kept by her relatives, <sup>believed</sup> ~~supposed~~  
that whatever might have existed was  
given back to the Raj's family after  
his death. - But she must be mistaken  
in this. For the Rev. Mr. Long (of  
"Nil Darpan") has now told me that  
he was informed by Mr. John Hall  
in 1847 that he then was in pos-  
session of valuable MSS. of the Raj's  
very important on future biography

Mr. Babu Raj'karni Bose has  
told me that when you were in England  
you tried to find out "the Chinese War of  
Babu Sagar". As I understand him  
to have meant, in order to obtain informa-  
tion as to "a large collection of the Raj's  
letters & some other writings" which were  
in their possession. Might I request the  
favour of you informing me from

when <sup>you</sup> derived the knowledge of  
these papers being in the possession of  
the Misses Ware? If I could discover  
any one who knows that such was the  
case, it might help me very much.  
Mr John Ware has long been dead.  
His daughter Rosalind married a  
Mr Brady of Litchmont, & died. Her  
Joseph Ware, brother to John & David Ware,  
survived them both. He died in 1862 (long  
near Bedford Square, - in Cleveland St.  
having, as I understand, removed thither)  
He left a widow, but had only married  
her about 2 years before his death. &  
she re-married about a year or so  
afterwards. It is not at all likely that  
she retained those papers, as I learn  
that she was a person who would have  
taken no interest in such matters, &  
tho' she had children, they were, of  
course, babies when Joseph Ware died.  
& are out of the question. And Miss  
Janet, who kept house for her uncles



John & Joseph until the latter's marriage  
(about 1860) knows nothing of the <sup>happ</sup>  
in whose hands, then, could they have  
been when Miss Carpenter wrote the  
"Note" in the Appendix to her "Last  
Days of B. A. Bay" of which I enclose a  
copy. -- This was in 1866. 4 years  
after Joseph Harris' death. Miss Jane  
Harris feels sure it could not have been  
his widow. Miss Jane had a half sister  
Fatima, now dead. but if it were she,  
Miss Jane could scarcely have been so  
utterly ignorant of the matter. ~~What~~  
If you can throw any light on the whole  
mystery, I shall be very greatly obliged.  
None of Miss Carpenter's relations can  
tell me. nor any of her friends to whom  
I have applied. All are quite ignorant.  
Nor can any of them guess who "the  
widow lady" was. Can you? --

I am in possession of your edition  
of the W. Adams' lecture on the

Raja. & I have also been fortunate  
as to make acquaintance with Mrs  
Withall, Mr Adams's niece & ex-sec-  
retary (he died long ago), who has kindly  
furnished me with valuable letters  
& memoranda <sup>by him</sup> relating to the Raja,  
from Mr Adams's papers. Besides these  
Babu Rajkumar Bose has promised  
me some very important materials  
from India. So that in any case, I  
entertain the purpose of compiling a  
Life of the Raja, as soon as practica-  
ble. But the Sanskrit MSS. are special.  
& I am very anxious to obtain them  
if possible. May I venture to hope that  
you will kindly afford me any of the  
light which you may possess thereupon?—

(P.S. I already possess Babu Rajkumar



With Chattopadhyay's 'Life' & some  
no of the Tattvabodhini which appeared  
in 1879, containing anecdotes of R. M. B.  
- also Kissay Bandhu's 'Life' &  
memoir of R. M. B. in the Calcutta  
Review. the Leonard's 'History of the  
Brahm-Samaj' & T. A. Sanyal's 'Rambhadr'

Hoping you will <sup>kindly</sup> pardon the intrusion  
of this letter of requests, I  
remain, Dear Sir,

Respectfully yours  
Sophia Dobson Collet.

XVI Sophia Dobson Collet's letter to Rakhaldas Halдар,  
London, July 7, 1882, describing her efforts to collect  
material for *Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy*  
From the collection of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad

Besides the article in the *Contemporary Review* already noticed, she published two other pamphlets bearing on the history of the Brahmo Samaj, one in 1871, called *An Historical Sketch of the Brahmo Samaj*, and the other in 1884 under the heading, *Outlines and Episodes of Brahmic History*. Not only are they very convenient sketches of the modern Theistic movement in India for the ordinary public unacquainted with the history of the Brahmo Samaj, but even many Brahmos will find in them many incidents and episodes to interest them in the history of their church, not known to them before.

Now we turn to the last but not the least of Miss Collet's manifold services to the Brahmo Samaj—her *Life of the Founder*. Rammohun Roy died in 1833. Nearly fifty years passed away but no adequate biography of the great religious reformer of modern India was written. In 1866, just on the eve of her visit to India, Miss Mary Carpenter published a small volume, entitled *The Last Days in England of the Rajah Rammohun Roy* but it was not a complete biography. The necessity of compiling such a biography was suggested at the second of the memorial meetings organised by the endeavours of the newly constituted Sadharan Brahmo Samaj in January 1880. In 1881, the late Nagendranath Chatterjee brought out a *Life of Rammohun Roy* in Bengali. It was a comparatively small volume. In the subsequent editions, however, the author greatly enlarged it, in which task he was largely indebted to the researches of Miss Collet. But as yet there was nothing which could be given to the non-Bengali reader. How early Miss Collet conceived the idea of writing a *Life of the Raja* cannot now be definitely ascertained, but from her ardent admiration for Rammohun it would seem that she had had the work long in view. In the *Brahmo Year-Book* for 1882, while reviewing the Bengali *Life of the Raja* by Nagendranath Chatterjee, she wrote: "The author has kindly granted me permission to make use of it in the biography of the Raja which I hope soon to compile." But the book was not quite ready even at the time of her death, which took place on the 27th March, 1894. The long delay is another proof of her scrupulous desire to be thorough and accurate as a historian. Mr. N. Gupta, perhaps the last



Indian gentleman to whom she could speak, writes to me to say that on her death-bed she told him "her only regret was that she could not finish the *Life* of Rammohun, though she had neglected her own affairs for the purpose." But she would not allow the work to appear before the public until she should have satisfied herself that all available sources had been consulted. For twelve long years she worked incessantly, and devoted to this work every moment that she could snatch in the midst of her failing health. To verify one date she would work six months. With what conscientious scrupulousness she used to write, will be abundantly clear from the published fruit of her labours. She consulted every available authority in England and in India. She never rested satisfied with second hand information, but always tried to get at the original sources. Her *Life of Rammohun Roy* is an ideal of conscientious biography. Thoroughness, passion for perfection, was the most prominent feature of Miss Collet's character. We may, in this connection, transcribe the following interesting confessions of Miss Collet, kindly supplied by one of her nieces as having been written by Miss Collet when it was the fashion to get one's friends to write their confessions in one's album :

"Your favourite virtue—Thoroughness.

Your favourite qualities in man—Faithfulness to a noble ideal,  
blended with sense and spiced with humour.

Your favourite qualities in woman—Sweetness and sense,  
bracketed equal, with conscience to take care of them.

Your favourite occupation—Writing theology.

Your chief characteristic—Enthusiasm streaked with cowardice.

Your idea of happiness—Listening to perfect music perfectly  
executed.

Your idea of misery—Tooth-ache in the middle of the night.

Your favourite colour and flower—Blue. White garden lily.

If not yourself, who would you be?—An accomplished M. A.  
Oxon, just beginning active life.

Where would you like to live?—In the suburbs of London.

Your favourite prose authors—R. H. Hutton, F. W. Newman, Emerson, Colonel Higginson.

Your favourite poets—Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Whittier,  
Lowell.

Your favourite painters and composers—Raphael, Guido, Handel, Mendelssohn, Miss Flower.

Your favourite heroes in real life—St. Augustine, Mendelssohn, Mr. Gladstone, Keshub C. Sen.

Your favourite heroines in real life—Vivia Perpetua and Mrs. Adams.

Your pet aversions—Hypocrisy and overbearingness.

What character in history do you most dislike?—John Calvin.

What is your present state of mind?—Tranquil satisfaction.

Your favourite motto—"Open to the light."

November 27, 1876—(Signed) Sophy Dobson Collet.

A word or two about Miss Collet's religious views will perhaps be looked for here. From her enthusiasm for the Brahmo Samaj one is likely to conclude that she was a pure theist; but that impression would not be correct. Miss Collet was, as we have seen, born in a Unitarian family. But her religious views underwent many changes. She had passed through many interesting phases of religious experience. When she had passed out of her inherited Unitarian convictions, she was for some time a sceptic. Subsequently she came under the influence of the late Mr. R. H. Hutton, the editor of the *Spectator*, who had been in his earlier life trained for the Unitarian ministry. With Mr. Hutton she approached, if not actually joined, the Church of England, though of course she was always very broad and liberal. She has left an autobiographical sketch describing the successive phases of her religious experience. Unfortunately, however, it has not been published.

The object of this brief sketch would not be fulfilled without a grateful acknowledgment of Miss Collet's warm reception of, and valuable help to, successive batches of Indians who went to England from the time of the visit of Keshub Chandra Sen and Ananda Mohan Bose down to the date of her death. Brahmo gentlemen in London found in her a most kind friend and will-wisher, ever ready to assist them with sound advice and guidance. How cordial was that relation and how valuable her help will be understood from the following letter written to Miss Collet by the late Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose, when leaving England at the end



of his four years' stay. He wrote from the *S. S. Hindustan* : "I sit down to send a few lines bearing my love and kindest remembrances to you. How sorry I felt at the shortness of our parting interview, when I had had to tear myself away for another engagement, and at my inability to see you again, as I had some faint hopes of doing ! \* \* \* But however short the time I could see you at the last, amongst the pleasantest of all the memories I carry with me of the years I have spent in England will be the thought of the happiness and pleasure I have derived from your acquaintance and friendship. A recollection of this will ever be engraved in my heart, and often and often I shall look back with regretful joy on those days when I have been with you, and derived a strengthening and cheering influence from your example and words." Miss Collet kept up regular correspondence with many Brahmo friends. Though not in complete agreement with the Brahmo Samaj in theology, she had completely identified herself with it in interest. The Brahmo Samaj was uppermost in her heart and mind. The Brahmos felt her to be one of themselves. She used to write in Bengali very affectionately to many Brahmo ladies whom she had never seen. The Brahmo Samaj never had a warmer friend and more sincere well-wisher. Miss Collet's memory should be cherished with the kindest regard by successive generations of Brahmos for the many and valuable services she rendered to their cause.

## A LIST OF RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY'S PUBLICATIONS IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES.

(Prepared by the Editors)

[The Editors would like to acknowledge the considerable help they have received in preparing this catalogue from the excellent bibliographies of Rammohun's works prepared by S. Amal Home, Cf. *Rammohun Roy, The Man and his Work Centenary Publicity Booklet-No 1*, Appendix E, incorporated in *The Father of Modern India, Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume Part II*, pp. 133-47 ; and Brajendranath Banerji, Cf. *Rammohun Roy (Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala No. 16, Fourth Edition, Calcutta 1353 B. S)* pp. 80-105. Regarding Rammohun's publications in England, the list in Mary Carpenter's *Last Days in England of Raja Rammohun Roy* Appendix A, (Calcutta Edition, 1915) pp. 219-21, has also been found useful. The present list excludes Rammohun's personal letters.]

### A. Works in Arabic-Persian.

1. *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhiddin*. 1803-04. (The text is in Persian with an Arabic introduction.)

2. *Manazarat-ul-Adyan*. No copy of the book has as yet been found. Some modern writers doubt whether it was at all published, though Rammohun makes a reference to it in the pages of the *Tuhfat*. Kazi Abdul Odood however thinks that it must have been circulated either in printed or in manuscript form. For the controversy, Cf. above, pp. 35-36.

3. *Javab-i-Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhiddin*. 1820 (?). An anonymous Persian booklet written in defence of Rammohun's *Tuhfat* against the attacks of the Zoroastrians, now in the British Museum Library, London. Possibly written by Rammohun Roy (Cf. above, p. 36).

Rammohun's *Tuhfat-ul Muwahhiddin* has been translated into English by Maulavi Obaidullah El Obaide and published by the Adi Brahma Samaj, Calcutta in 1884 (Cf. above, p. 18n).



A Bengali translation from the original Arabic-Persian text was published by the late Girish Chandra Sen the famous missionary of the Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Samaj and an erudite scholar in Islamic theology, serially in the fortnightly journal *Dharmatattva* 1821 Śaka, Vaiśākha 1, p. 78 ; Vaiśākha 16, pp. 88-89 ; Jyāistha 1, pp. 98-100 ; Jyāistha 16, p. 113 ; Ashāḍha 16, pp. 137-38 ; Śrāvaṇa 1, pp. 148-49 ; Śrāvaṇa 16, pp. 161-62 ; Bhādra 16, pp. 183-84 (Vol. 34, Nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 16 respectively). The available Bengali translation in the form of a booklet by S. Jyotirindranath Das, published by the Sādhāran Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta, 1949, is from Obaidullah's English version.

### B. Works in Bengali and Sanskrit.

1. *Vedānta-Grantha*. 1815. (It is a commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras* in Bengali.)
2. *Vedāntasāra*. 1815. (A short summary of the *Vedānta-Grantha* in Bengali).
3. *Talabakāropanishat* or *Kenopanishat*. (Bengali translation according to the gloss of Śaṅkarāchārya). 1816.
4. *Isopanishat*. (Bengali translation according to the gloss of Śaṅkarāchārya). 1816.
5. *Utsabānanda Vidyāvāgiśer Sahit Vichar*. (Śāstric disputes with Utsabānanda Vidyāvāgis). 1816-17. Under this head Rammohun composed *three* pamphlets in *Sanskrit*. In the end he succeeded in converting his orthodox adversary to his views and Utsabānanda is known to have joined the *Brahmo Samaj* when that organisation was started in 1828, as reader and expounder of the Upanishads.

The texts were discovered by Dr. V. Ray of Giridih in the Serampore College Library. The second of Rammohun's pamphlets in this series was translated into Bengali by S. Nalin Chandra Ganguli in the *Pravāsī* Kārtik, 1335 B. S. pp. 104-10. The translation has been reprinted in the Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Parishad Edition of Rammohun's Bengali and Sanskrit Works-2, pp. 26-34.

6. *Bhattāchāryer Sahit Vichār* (Śāstric disputes with Bhattāchārya). 1817. It is a reply in Bengali to the criticisms

of Rammohun's *Vedānta-Grantha*, contained in Mrityunjaya Vidyālaṅkāra's *Vedānta-Chandrikā* which was also published in 1817.

7. *Kaṭhopanishat*. (Bengali translation according to the gloss of Śaṅkarāchārya). 1817.

8. *Māṇḍyukopanishat*. (Bengali translation according to the gloss of Śaṅkarāchārya). 1817.

9. *Gosvāmīr Sahit Vichār* (Śāstric disputes with Gosvāmī). 1818. It is a reply in Bengali to the criticisms of a Vaishnavite opponent.

10. *Sahamaran Vishaye Pravartak O Nibartaker Sambād* (A Conference between an Advocate and an Opponent of the Custom of Burning Widows Alive). 1818. Rammohun's first Bengali tract on *Suttee*.

11. *Gāyatrīr Artha*. An exposition in Bengali of the famous *Gayatrī* mantra of the *R̥g Veda* (III. 62.10). 1818.

12. *Mundakopanishat*. (Bengali translation according to the gloss of Śaṅkarāchārya). 1819.

13. *Ātmānātmaviveka* of Śaṅkarāchārya with Bengali translation. 1819 (?). There is some doubt regarding the exact year of publication (Cf. *Rammohana-Granthāvali* published by the Vaṅgiya Sahitya Parishad—4, p. 76 ; Brajendranath Banerji *Rammohun Roy* 4th Edition p. 89).

14. *Sahamaran Vishaye Pravartak Nivartaker Dvitiya Sambād* (A Second Conference between an Advocate and an Opponent of the Practice of Burning Widows Alive). 1819. Rammohun's second Bengali tract on *Suttee*. It is a reply to the criticisms of Rammohun's first Bengali tract against *Suttee*, contained in Pandit Kashinath Tarkavagis' Bengali pamphlet *Vidhāyak Nishedhaker Sambād* which had been published with an English translation from Calcutta earlier in 1819.

15. *Kavitākārer Sahit Vichār* (Śāstric Disputes with the Composer of Verses). 1820. A work in Bengali in reply to



an anonymous apponent who has been mentioned as *Kavitākāra* or the “composer of verses.” The identity of the adversary has not been discovered.

16. *Subrahmaṇya Śāstrir Sahit Vichār* (Śāstric Disputes with Subrahmaṇya Śāstrī). 1820. This was published simultaneously in four languages, Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi and English. The third annual report of the School Book Society mentions a tract by Rammohun Roy under the title “Reply to the Observations of Sobha Sastree.” No separate work of that name however has come to light as yet. The editors of the *Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Parishad Collection* of Rammohun’s Bengali and Sanskrit works are probably right in their supposition that “Sobha Sastree” in the above context, is only an abbreviation of the name Subrahmaṇya Śāstrī and the reference in the School Book Society’s report is to the extant work *Subrahmaṇya Śāstrir Sahit Vichār* (*Rammohana-Granthavali*, *Sahitya Parishad Ed.-2*, p. 103 ).

17. *Brāhmaṇa Sevadhi : Brāhmaṇa O Misinari Samivād* ( Numbers 1, 2 and 3 ). 1821. A general defence of Brahmanical Hinduism against the attacks of the Christian Missionaries ( Cf. above, pp. 160-61 ). The first three numbers of the *Brāhmaṇa Sevadhi* were published together with their English translations entitled *The Brahmunicipal Magazine : The Missionary and the Brahmun*.

18. *Chāri Praśner Uttar* ( Reply to the Four Questions ). 1822. The tract contains Rammohun’s reply to four questions asked by an orthodox opponent in the columns of the *Samāchār Darpan* April 6, 1822, under the signature, *Dharmasamisthāpānākāṁkshī* (one desiring to establish religion).

19. *Prārthanāpātra*. 1823. This is a tract on the nature of universal monotheistic worship. It was published together with an English version entitled *Humble Suggestions to his Countrymen who believe in the One True God*.

20. *Pādri O Śisya Samivād*. 1823 (?). It contains a trenchant criticism of the principles of Trinitarian Christianity in the shape of an imaginary dialogue between a Trinitarian missionary and three Chinese converts to Trinitarian Christianity.

Its English version entitled *Dialogue between a Trinitarian Missionary and three Chinese Converts* was published in 1823. The date of the publication of the Bengali tract may be tentatively inferred from this.

21. *Gurupādukā*. 1823. The book which has not been found, is mentioned in Rev. Long's *Descriptive Catalogue of Bengali Books* (Calcutta, 1855) p.103. It appears to have been a small tract circulated in reply to an earlier anonymous attack (entitled *Jñānānjanaśālākā*) on Rammohun. (It's preface has been printed in the Bengali magazine *Chhota Galpa* Paush 1, 1340 B. S., Vol. II No. 24, p. 1179; Cf. *Rammohana Granthāvali* Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Parishad Ed., Bibliography at the end, p. 73.)

22. *Pathyapradān* or *Medicine for the Sick*. 1823. An elaborate reply to Pandit Kashinath Tarkapañchānan's *Pāshañḍa Pīḍana* also published in 1823 (Cf. above, p 148).

23. *Brahmaniṣṭha Grihasther Lakshman*. 1826. It discusses the signs of a householder who is truly devoted to Brahman.

24. *Kāyasther Sahit Madyapān Vishayak Vichār* (A Śāstric dispute with a gentleman of the Kāyastha caste, over the question of the drinking of wine). 1826. The tract was published under the signature "Ramchandra Das."

25. *Vajrasūchī* (Sanskrit text and Bengali translation of the *Vajrasūchi Upanishad*, a Māhāyāna Buddhist text which criticises the Brahmanical caste system). 1827. (Cf. above, pp. 238-39).

26. *Gāyatrīā Paramopāsanāvidhānam*. 1827. A Sanskrit-Bengali tract on the means of worshipping the Absolute through the *Gāyatrī Mantra*. Its English translation was also published the same year.

27. *Brahmopāsanā*. 1828. A tract on Divine Worship.

28. *Brahmasangīt*. 1828. A Book of Bengali devotional hymns containing compositions of Rammohun Roy and his intimate associates. (Cf. above, p. 235n.)



29. *Anuṣṭhān*. 1829. A Bengali tract which under the form of a dialogue between a master (*āchārya*) and his disciple (*śiṣya*), discusses Rammohun's concept of *Upāsanā* (divine worship) and its ideal method. The tract though small, is one of Rammohun's most important theological publications. In this connection mention may be made of a work by Rammohun, entitled *Abatarāṇikā* said to have been published in 1829, and mentioned by Rev. J. Long in his *Descriptive Catalogue of Bengali Books* (Calcutta 1855) p. 103. Possibly this is the same tract as *Anuṣṭhān*, as the short introduction of the last-named tract also calls itself *Abatarāṇikā*. Further, Rev. Long describes *Abatarāṇikā* as a Sanskrit-Bengali work "on 12 questions with their answers and proofs, from the Bhagavat Gita on worship." Rammohun's *Anuṣṭhān* also contains twelve questions and answers. The only point of discrepancy is that Rammohun in *Anuṣṭhān* does not quote scriptural proof only from the *Gītā* but from other texts like the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, *Taittiriya Upanishad*, *Muṇḍaka Upanishad*, *Kena Upanishad*, *Chhāndogya Upanishad*, *Kāṭha Upanishad*, *Brahma-Sūtras*, *Gauḍapadā's Kārikā*, *Vishnu-Purāṇa*, *Manu-saṁhitā*, and *Mahanirvāṇa-Tantra*, as well.

30. *Sahamaran Vishaya*. 1829. This is Rammohun's last Bengali tract on *Suttee* published as reply to the attacks of two orthodox opponents who wrote under the pen-names of "Vipra" and "Mughabodha-chhātra".

31. *Kshudra Patrī*. (Exact time of the publication of this leaflet, containing two Upanishadic verses and two elegant Sanskrit hymns composed by Rammohun, is unknown. It was published apparently before Rammohun had sailed for England and was meant as the sub-title states, for free distribution.)

32. *Gauḍīya Vyakaran*. 1833. It is a grammar of the Bengali language written on the model of Rammohun's earlier work in English on the same subject printed in 1826. The text was published by the Calcutta School Book Society in April 1833, when Rammohun was in England (Cf. above. pp. 192-93, 295-96).

Apart from the above works, Rammohun had published a Bengali verse-translation of the entire *Bhagavat Gītā* but unfortunately the book has not been traced. It must have come out sometime before 1829, because Rammohun has made a reference to it in his *Sahamāran Vishaya* published in that year (Cf. *Rammohana-Granthāvalī* Vaṅgīya Sahitya Parishad Edition-3, p. 55). Besides Rammohun had published his own editions of a number of Upanishads as well as of Śaṅkara's entire commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtras* (Cf. above, pp. 98-100). These however cannot be included in a list of his original writings. The third annual report of the School Book Society (1819-20) mentions a Bengali work of Rammohun entitled "Reply to a MS of Ram-gopala Sormono". No book of this name has however come to light as yet. The editors of the Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Parishad collection of Rammohun's Sanskrit and Bengali works think that the work may be identical with *Gosvāmir Sahit Vichār* (Cf. above, no. 9 in the present list). This appears to be an unwarranted assumption in the present state of our knowledge.

A word must also be said here about a Bengali tract called *Brāhma-Pauttalika Samivād* mentioned by Rev. Long (*Catalogue* p. 103) to have been a work of Rammohun Roy published in 1820. In an earlier notice in the Third Annual Report of the Calcutta School Book Society (1819-20) however the authorship of the book has been attributed to Brajamohun Majumdar one of the intimate associates of Rammohun. The work had also been translated into English in 1821 under the title "A Tract against the prevailing system of Hindoo Idolatry". In the preface to the English translation too the European translator mentions Brajamohun Majumdar as the author of the original Bengali text (Cf. *The Father Of Modern India : Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume* Part II p. 126). A possible explanation of this anomaly may be that Rammohun actually wrote and published the book under the signature of his friend Brajamohun Majumdar. The persistent assumption of pen-names and, the names of his friends and followers in publishing his own writings was one of Rammohun's well-known habits (Cf. above, p. 217). Until however the question of authorship is finally settled, it would be unsafe to include



*Brāhma-Pauttalika Samivād* in a list of Rammohun's works. A critical edition of this Bengali tract together with its English translation is at present being prepared by Dr. Stephen N. Hay of the University of Chicago., U. S. A.

The first collected edition of Rammohun Roy's Bengali works was published in 1839 by Sī Annada Prasad Banerji, zamindar of Telinipara, (Hooghly Dt., West Bengal), who belonged to the circle of Rammohun's distinguished friends and followers. Subsequently the following collections of his Bengali and Sanskrit works have been published : (1) *Raja Rammohan Raya Pranīta Granthāvalī*, edited by Rajnarayan Basu and Ananda Chandra Vedantavāgiś, Adi Brahmo Samaj Press, Calcutta, 1880 ; (2) *Rājā Rammohana Rayer Sanskrita O Vāngāla Granthāvalī*, printed at the Kuntalin Press, Calcutta and published by the Panini Office, Allahabad, 1905 ; (3) *Rammohana-Granthāvalī* edited by Brajendranath Banerji and Sajani Kanta Das, published by the Vaṅgīya Sahityā Parishad (Calcutta, 1359 B.S.)

### C. Works in Hindi.

1. *Vedānta-Grantha* (Hindi translation from the Bengali original). 1815 (?)

2. *Vedāntasāra* (Hindi translation from the Bengali original). 1815 (?)

The two above works have unfortunately not yet been traced. Rammohun refers to these Hindi publications of his in the preface to *An Abridgment of the Vedant* (Calcutta, 1816) (Cf. *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* ed. Nag and Burman, Part II pp 59-60). Pandit Kshitimohana Sen Śāstrī mentions having seen a copy of the Hindi translation apparently of the *Vedānta-Grantha* in his boyhood at the house of Sī Abhayacharn Bhattacharya of Mirzapur (U. P.) (Cf. his *Yugaguru Rammohana*, Calcutta, 1952, p. 8)

3. *Subrhmānya Śāstrīr Sahit Vichār* (Hindi version). 1820.

Rammohun's Hindi prose style has been discussed by Pandit Hazari Prasad Dvivedī in a Bengali article entitled

“Hindī Bhashaya Rammohana” (Cf. *The Father of Modern India* : Rammohun Centenary Commemoration Volume, Part II pp. 465-68).

**D. Works in English.** (Published from Calcutta) :

1. Translation of an *Abridgment of the Vedant or Resolution of all the Veds* ; the most celebrated and revered work of Brahminical Theology ; establishing the Unity of the Supreme Being ; and that He Alone is the object of Propitiation and Worship. 1816.

2. Translation of the *Cena [Kena] Upanishad*, one of the chapters of the *Sāma Veda* ; according to the gloss of the celebrated Shancaracharya : establishing the Unity and the Sole Omnipotence of the Supreme Being ; and that He Alone is the Object of Worship. 1816.

3. Translation of the *Ishopanishad*, one of the chapters of the *Yajur Ved* : according to the commentary of the celebrated Shankaracharya : establishing the Unity and Incomprehensibility of the Supreme Being ; and that His Worship alone can lead to Eternal Beatitude. 1816.

4. *A Defence of Hindoo Theism* in reply to the Attack of an Advocate for Idolatry at Madras. 1817.

5. *A Second Defence of the Monotheistical System of the Vedas* in reply to an apology for the present state of Hindoo Worship. 1817. This is a reply to Mrityunjaya Vidyālamkāra's *An Apology for the present system of Hindoo Worship* published in 1817.

6. *Counter-Petition of the Hindu Inhabitants of Calcutta against Suttee*. 1818.

7. Translation of a conference between an Advocate for, and an Opponent of, the Practice of Burning Widows Alive, from the original Bungla. 1818.

8. Translation of the *Moonduk Opunishud of the Uthurvū-Ved*, according to the gloss of the celebrated Shunkuracharyu. 1819.



9. Translation of *the Kut'h-Opunishud of the Ujoor-Ved*, according to the gloss of the celebrated Sunkuracharyu. 1819.

10. *An Apology for the Pursuit of Final Beatitude, independently of Brahmunicipal Observances*. 1820. It is the English version of Rammohun's scriptural dispute with Pandit Subrahmanya Śāstri

11. *A Second Conference between an Advocate for and an Opponent of, the Practice of Burning Widows Alive*. Translated from the original Bengalee. 1820.

12. *The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness*; extracted from the Books of the New Testament ascribed to the four Evangelists. With translations into Sungscrit and Bengalee. 1820.

The promised Sanskrit and Bengali translations were never published by Rammohun. A Bengali translation of the book was however published by Sj Rakhal Das Haldar under the title *Sukhaśāntir Upāyasvarūp Yisu-pranita Hitopadeś* (Calcutta 1859). It may be noted here that Rammohun's *Precepts of Jesus* created a tradition of liberal intrepertion of Christ's teachings in Christian circles and inspired the Earl of Northbrook to publish his *The Teachings of Jesus Christ in His Own Words* (London, Sampson Low, Morston & Co. 1900). In his preface (p.v) Northbrook writes : "My purpose has been to put before them [the People of India] the Teaching of Christ in His own words, as recorded in the four Gospels.....The learned and distinguished Hindu, Raja Rammohun Roy, published eighty years ago a compilation called 'The Precepts of Jesus, the guide to peace and happiness', with the same object in view, but in a different shape."

13. *An Appeal to the Christian Public* in defence of the "Precepts of Jesus", by a Friend to Truth. 1820.

14. *Second Appeal to the Christian Public* in defence of the "Precepts of Jesus." 1821.

15. *The Brahmanical Magazine* or the Missionary and the Brahmun, being a vindication of the Hindoo religion against the attacks of Christian Missionaries, Nos. I, II & III. 1821.

16. *Brief Remarks regarding Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females according to the Hindoo Law of Inheritance.* 1822.

17. *The Brahmunicipal Magazine or the Missionary and the Brahmun*, No. IV. 1823.

18. *Final Appeal to the Christian Public* in defence of the "Precepts of Jesus". 1823.

19. *Humble Suggestions to his countrymen who believe in One True God* (published in the name of Prasanna Kumar Tagore). 1823.

20. *Petitions against the Press Regulations.*

(a) Memorial to the Supreme Court. 1823.

(b) Appeal to the King in Council. 1823.

21. *A Few Queries for the Serious Consideration of Trinitarians* Parts I & II. 1823.

22. *A Dialogue between a Missionary and three Chinese Converts.* 1823.

23. *A Vindication of the Incarnation of the Deity as the common basis of Hindooism and Christianity* against the schismatic attacks of R. Tytler Esqr. M. D. (Published under the pseudonym Ram Doss). 1823.

24. *A Letter to Lord Amherst on Western Education* dated Calcutta, December 11, 1823.

25. *A Letter to Rev. Henry Ware on the Prospects of Christianity in India.* 1824.

26. *Translation of a Sanskrit Tract on Different Modes of Worship* (published under the curious signature "By a friend of the Author"). 1825.

27. *Bengalee Grammar in English Language.* 1826.

28. *A Translation into English of a Sanskrit Tract, inculcating the Divine Worship*, esteemed by those who believe in the revelation of the Veds as most appropriate to the nature of the Supreme Being. 1827.



29. *Answer of a Hindoo to the question, "Why do you frequent Unitarian places of worship instead of the numerously attended Established Churches?"* 1827. This tract was published in the name of Chandra Sekhar Dev (Cf. above, p. 217).

30. *Symbol of the Trinity.* 1828. (?).

31. *The Universal Religion : Religious Instructions founded on Sacred Authorities.* 1829.

32. *Petition to the Government against Regulation III of 1828 for the resumption of Lakheraj Lands.* 1829.

33. *Petition of the Padishah (Akbar II) of Delhi to King George IV of England.* 1829.

34. *Address to Lord Willim Bentinck, Governor General of India upon the passing of the Act for the abolition of the Suttee.* 1830.

35. *Essay on the Rights of Hindoos over Ancestral Property according to the Law of Bengal.* 1830.

36. *Letters on Hindoo Law of Inheritance.* 1830.

37. *Abstract of Arguments regarding the burning of widows considered as a religious rite.* 1830.

38. *Counter-Petition to the House of Commons to the Memorial of the advocates of the Suttee.* 1830.

39. *On the Possibility, Practicability and Expediency of Substituting the Bengali Language for the English.* (Date of Composition unknown). It is a humorous skit published presumably for the first time in the *Modern Review*, December, 1928, pp. 635-36 (Cf. above, p. 208).

40. *Hindu Authorities in favour of slaying the cow and eating its flesh.* (Unpublished) (Cf. Brajendranath Banerji *Rammohana Raya* 4th Ed. p. 100).

**E. Works in English** (Published in England) :

1. *Abridgment of the Vedant* and the English translation of the *Cena Upanishad*—Reprinted with a preface by John Digby containing a letter addressed to him by Rammohun Roy. : T and J Hoitt, London, 1817.

2. *The Precepts of Jesus* together with the *First and Second Appeals to the Christian Public* with a preface by Thomas Rees, published by the Unitarian Society, London. 1823. (Second London Edition, 1834).

3. *Final Appeal to the Christian Public* in defence of the Precepts of Jesus. London, Hunter, 1823.

4. *Answer to Queries by Rev. H. Ware* of Cambridge U. S., printed in "Correspondence relative to the Prospects of Christianity and the Means of Promoting its Reception in India." London : C. Fox, 1825.

5. *Treaty with the King of Delhi. Decision thereon by the Governor General of India, Reports of the British Resident and Political Agent at Delhi ; with Remarks.* London, Printed by John Nichols, 1831. It is not included in any of the extant collected editions of Rammohun's *English Works*, but has been printed in the *Modern Review* for January, 1934, pp. 49-61.

6. *Some Remarks in vindication of the Resolution passed by the Government of Bengal in 1829 abolishing the Practice of Female Sacrifices in India* : Printers, Nichols and Sons, London, 1832. This tract also does not form part of any edition of Rammohun's collected *English Works*. A copy of it was discovered by the late Prof. U. N. Ball in the library of the Foreman Christian College, Lahore. It has been published in the *Modern Review* March, 1934, pp. 272-76.

7. *Essay on the Right of Hindoos over Ancestral Property according to the Law of Bengal. With an Appendix containing Letters on the Hindoo Law of Inheritance.* London, Smith, Elder and Co., 1832.



8. *Exposition of the Practical Operation of the Judicial and Revenue Systems of India, and of the general character and condition of its Native Inhabitants, as submitted in Evidence to the Authorities in England With Notes and Illustrations ; also a brief preliminary sketch of the ancient and modern boundaries and of the history of that Country. Elucidated by a Map.* London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1832.

9. *Answers of Rammohun Roy to the Queries on the Salt Monopoly.* March 19, London 1832. It has been reprinted in the *Modern Review* May, 1934, pp. 553-55, from *Parliamentary Papers 1831-32* (Vol. XI pp. 685-86, Appendix 140).

10. *Translation of Several Principal Books Passages and Texts of the Veds, and of some Controversial Works in Brahmical Theology.* London, Parbury, Allen & Co., 1832.

This collection includes the following Tracts :

- (a) *Translation of the Abridgment of the Vedant.*
- (b) *Trans. of the Moonduck-Oopunishud.*
- (c) *Trans. of the Cena Upanishad.*
- (d) *Trans. of the Kut'h-Opunishud.*
- (e) *Trans. of the Ishopunishud.*
- (f) *A Translation into English of a Sanskrit Tract inculcating the Divine Worship, etc.*
- (g) *A Defence of Hindoo Theism.*
- (h) *Second Defence of the Monotheistical System of the Veds, etc.*
- (i) *An Apology for the Pursuit of Final Beatitude, independently of Brahminical Observances.*
- (j) *Translation of a Conference between an Advocate for and an Opponent of the practice of burning Widows alive.*
- (k) *A Second Conference between an Advocate for, and an Opponent of, the practice of burning Widows alive.*
- (l) *Abstract of Arguments regarding the Burning of Widows, considered as a Religious Rite.*
- (m) *Brief Remarks regarding Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females according to the Hindoo Law of Inheritance.*

11. *Appeal to the British Nation against a violation of common justice and a breach of public faith by the Supreme Government of India with the Native Inhabitants*. London, 1832(?) The library of the Foreman Christian College, Lahore, possesses a copy of the tract. On September 29, 1829, the Government of India rejected the appeal which Rammohun had submitted on behalf of the land-holders of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa against Regulation III of 1828 for the resumption of Lakheraj Lands. While in England, Rammohun preferred a further appeal on the matter to the Court of Directors in the name of his companion Ramratna Mukherjee. Even this failing to produce any result, he published the above booklet in the name of the same Ramratna Mukherjee. The *Times* of London came out in its issues of April 6 and 13, 1833, with some adverse remarks on the action of the Government regarding this particular problem. The criticisms were sought to be met by an anonymous supporter of the India Government in the *Asiatic Journal* (May to August, 1833, pp. 109-11), under the signature A. B. In the same volume of the *Journal* (pp. 214-18) a detailed reply was given to A. B. by a correspondent who signed C. D. Possibly the latter was no other than Rammohun. The booklet together with the criticisms and discussions it generated in the pages of the *Times*, the *Asiatic Journal* etc., has been printed in J. K. Majumdar's *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* Appendix III, pp. 512-35.

12. *Translation of the Creed maintained by the Ancient Brahmins as founded on the Sacred Authorities*. London, Nichols and Son, 1833.

13. *The Autobiographical Letter*. It was published by Sandford Arnot in the *Athenaeum* October 5, 1833 (Cf. above, pp. 496-98).

#### **F. Works Published in America**

1. *Correspondence Relative to the Prospects of Christianity and the Means of Promoting its Reception in India*. Cambridge University Press, Hilliard and Metcalf, 1824.



2. *The Precepts of Jesus* together with the *First and the Second Appeals to the Christian Public*. New York, B. Bates, 1825.

3. *Appeal to the Christian Public in Defence of the Precepts of Jesus*. Boston (?), *Christian Register Office* (?), about April, 1826. Miss. Adrienne Moore is not certain whether it was really an American edition of any of the *Appeals* or merely an advertisement by the *Christian Register Office*, of the 1823 London (Hunter) edition of the *Final Appeal*. No 1826 copy of any American edition of any of the *Appeals*, has so far been found.

4. *The Precepts of Jesus* together with the *First, Second and the Final Appeals to the Christian Public*, Parts. I & II. Boston, *Christian Register Office*, 1828.

5. *A Vindication of the Incarnation of the Deity as a Common Basis of Hindooism and Christianity*. Salem, Massachusetts, 1828.

6. Brief Extracts from Rammohun Roy's *Appeals*. Philadelphia Unitarian Association Publication 183—? Miss Moore adds the following comment: "This is possibly an excerpt torn from some publication".

Miss Moore mentions as appendix to her list, a publication entitled *Address to the Members of Congress on the Abolition of Slavery* Washington, D. C. (?), 1830-1833 (?), and adds: "This document on slavery is signed 'Rammohun Roy', but the name is merely a pseudonym, as seen from the lines: 'In closing this address allow me to assume the name of one of the most enlightened and benevolent of the human race now living, though not a white man, Rammohun Roy'." (*Rammohun Roy and America* p. 52).<sup>1</sup>

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1. For the list of the American editions of Rammohun's works, we have relied on Adrienne Moore's *Rammohun Roy and America*, (Calcutta, 1942), pp. 50-52.—Editors.

### G. German edition

1. *Auflosung des Wedant, orderder Auflosung aller Weds des berühmtesen Werke Braminischer Gottesgelahrtheit worin die Einheit des Hochsten Wesens dargethan wird, so wie auch dass Gottallein der Gegenstand der Verohnung und Verehrung seyn konne.* Jena, 1817. (German Translation of the *Abridgment of the Vedant.*)

### H. Dutch Edition

1. *Vertaling Van Verscheidene voername Boeken, Pladtsen en Teksten van de Veddas.* Naar het Engelsch door P. P. Rooda Van Eysinga. Kampen, 1840. (It is apparently a Dutch rendering of the collection entitled *Translation of Several Principal Books Passages and Texts of the Veds* published from London in 1832.)

The following collected editions of Rammohun Roy's English works have so far been published.

(1) *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* edited by Jogendra Chunder Ghosh, compiled and published by Eshan Chander Bose, Volume I, Oriental Press, Calcutta 1885 ; Vol. II, Aruna Press, Calcutta 1887.

(2) *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* edited by Jogendra Chunder Ghosh, republished in three volumes by Srikanta Roy. Agents :—S. K. Lahiri & Co, Calcutta, 1901.

(3) *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* including some additional letters and an English translation of the Raja's *Tuhfatul Muwahiddin* with an introduction by Ramnanda Chatterjee. Panini Office, Allahbad, 1906.

(4) *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* edited by Kalidas Nag and Debajyoti Burman, in seven parts. Parts I to VI are at present available. Published by the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj: Calcutta (1945-51).



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2. Aspland, Robert—*A Sermon on the occasion of the lamented death of the Raja Rammohun Roy, with a Biographical Sketch*, London, 1833.
3. Ball Upendranath—*Rammohun Roy : A Study of his Life, Works and Thoughts*, U. Roy & Sons, Calcutta, 1933.
4. Banerji Brajendranath—*Rajah Rammohun Roy's Mission to England*. (Based on unpublished records.), N. M. Roychowdhury & Co., Calcutta, 1926.
5. Banerji Brajendranath *Rammohana Rāya* (in Bengali) —Fourth Edition, 1353 B. S. (Sāhitya-Sādhak-Charitmālā No. 16, Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Parishad, Calcutta.)
6. Basu Śasibhushan—*Raja Rammohana Rayer Jivani* (Second Edition, Calcutta 1332 B.S.) (Bengali.)
7. Carpenter, Lant—*A Review of the Labours Opinions and Character of Rajah Rammohun Roy in a Discourse on Occasion of Death, Delivered in Lewin's Mead Chapel, Bristol ; A series of Illustrative Extracts From His Writings ; And a Biographical Memoir to which is subjoined an Examination of some Derogatory Statements in the Asiatic Journal*. London and Bristol, 1833.
8. Carpenter, Mary—*Last Days in England of the Rajah Rammohun Roy* London 1866. [Reprinted by the Rammohun Library, Calcutta, 1915).
9. Chakravarti, Ajit Kumar—*Rājā Rammohana* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1934.

10. Chakravarty, Satis Chandra (ed.) *The Father of Modern India : Commemoration Volume of the Rammohun Roy Centenary Celebrations*, 1933. Calcutta, 1935.

11. Chatterjee, Nagendranath,—*Mahātmā Rājā Rām-mohana Rāyer Jibancharit* (in Bengali), Calcutta 1881. (Fifth revised and enlarged edition published by the Indian Press Ltd., Allahabad, 1928.)

12. Chatterjee, Nandamohun—*Mahatmā Raja Rām-mohana Rāya Sammandhīya Kshudra Kshudra Galpa* (Some Anecdotes from the Life of Raja Rammohun Roy), Calcutta, 1287 B. S. (Second Edition, Calcutta, 1298 B. S.)

13. Chatterjee, Ramananda—*Rammohun Roy and Modern India*. Calcutta, 1918. (New reprint issued by the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta. Year of publication not mentioned.)

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20. Majumdar, Jatindra Kumar (ed.)—*Raja Rammohun Roy and the Last Moghuls : A Selection from Official Records 1803—1859, with an Historical Introduction*. Art Press, Calcutta, 1939.

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## ERRATA

- Page 31, line 27 : *for* the *read* 'The'
- Page 32, line 28 : *for* residencc *read* residence.
- Page 42, line 3 : *for* Spears *read* Spear.
- Page 47, line 27 : *for* Macanaghten *read* Macnaghten.
- Page 47, line 30 : *for* Banerjee *read* Banerji.
- Page 58, line 30 : *for* vishaaye *read* vishaye.
- Page 75, lines 23-24 : *for* Biograph *read* Biography.
- Page 93, line 35 : *for* fourh *read* fourth.
- Page 95, line 28 : *for* campaign *read* campaign.
- Page 114, line 24 : *for* school *read* school<sup>5</sup>.
- Page 156, line 25 : *for* previous article *read* article.
- Page 157, line 35 : *for* seems *read* seem.
- Page 158, line 11 : *for* ground *read* grounds.
- Page 160, line 13 : *for* letters *read* letter.
- Page 161, line 10 : *for* aud *read* and.
- Page 166, line 16 ; *for* Chriprašner *read* Chāriprašner.
- Page 207, line 17 : *for* Burmon *read* Burman.
- Page 221, line 31 : *for* the *read* 'The'.
- Page 262, line 16 : *for* Rommohun *read* Rammohun.
- Page 354, line 30 : *for* admirer's *read* admirers.
- Page 368, line 32 : *for* 'of controversy'  
*read* 'of the controversy'.
- Page 394, line 26 : *for* H. F. *read* F. H'
- Page 423, line 5 : *for* Magnaghten *read* Macnaghten.









